■ Entertainment / A30
How to improve MMFF according to filmmakers

■ Sports / A25
Delasin places 9th in LPGA tilt, pockets P1.9M

■ Lifestyle / D4
Tourism with a conscience

■ Metro / A20
Fat profits from Metro lipo clinics

Tanong ng Bayan / A18
Bagong graduates: Maganda ba ang hinaharap?

CELLCARD KADA ARAW, CELLPHONE KADA LINGGO! Text 2910 now!

Who ordered killings in Tarlac, bishop asks

By Christian V. Esguerra

A CATHOLIC bishop yesterday demanded in strongly worded terms that authorities unmask those behind the killing of three persons involved in the long-running labor dispute at Hacienda Luisita.

In a pastoral statement, Archbishop Pa-

WHO ORDERED/ A9

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

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RP's biggest 'calamay' gone in 10 minutes

CANDON CITY—And then there was none.

A "state of *calamay*" was laughingly declared here on Monday after about 5,000 residents, tourists and travelers passing through demo-

RP'S BIGGEST/ A8

Palace: VAT bill will pass

But 2 senators doubt measure will be approved this week

By Gil Cabacungan Jr. and Juliet Labog-Javellana

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo has not bothered to talk to her allies in the Senate to enlist their support for the value-added tax (VAT) measure, confident that Congress would pass it during the three-day special session this week, according to one of her advisers.

"We are confident that most of our lawmakers would no longer need convincing on the paramount interest of the VAT bill," said Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye at a briefing in Malacañang yesterday. "We continue to have faith in the collective patriotism of our legislators."

But Senators Ralph Recto and Serge Osmeña said they doubted the VAT bill would be passed during the special session beginning Wednesday, which the President had called purposely for the passage of the measure.

Eleven professors at the University of the Philippines School of Economics issued a paper on the VAT bill on Good Friday, saying that the shape of the measure that Congress will pass would determine whether the country would remain in its fiscal sickbed.

The INQUIRER ran yesterday a story on the 17-page paper of the economists titled, "The economy on a cusp: The proposed VAT amendments and their larger significance."

The economists, collectively called the "UP 11," said "an increase in the VAT rate from 10 to 12 percent is an inevitable and basic component of any adequate formula to address the fiscal crisis."

But Recto, Osmeña and Sen. Manuel Roxas II shrugged off the warning.

They said the Senate must pass a "credible" revenue measure without necessarily increasing the VAT rate from 10 percent to 12 percent as endorsed by Malacañang and approved by the House of Representatives.

Recto, chair of the Senate ways and means committee, stood by his committee report seeking the retention of the present 10 percent VAT rate but lifting the exemptions on various sectors, including oil and power.

"Lifting the exemptions alone plus an increase in corporate income tax will

PALACE/ A10

HUNDREDS of Metro Manilans invade polluted Manila Bay as they try to beat the scorching heat after the Holy Week. Weathermen expect temperatures to soar in the coming days. AFP

Hottest day of year sears Metro; more steamy days ahead

By Blanche S. Rivera

IF YOU thought it was very hot yesterday, you were right.

The Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration recorded the highest temperature of the year yesterday afternoon.

The temperature in Quezon City reached 35.8 degrees Celsius at 1:45 p.m., heralding the arrival of the summer months, Pagasa weather branch chief Nathaniel Cruz said.

The advice from weathermen is simple: Don't let tempers rise with the temperature. You have plenty of time to do that.

Yesterday was just a foretaste of what is to come in the next several months. More steamy days lie ahead.

"This is just the beginning. We're now moving into the warm months of the year. This will be the normal temperature until maybe mid-May," Cruz said in a phone interview.

Yesterday's temperature was two degrees lower than the highest temperature recorded by Pagasa in the last five years.

The hottest summer day since 2000 was April 28 last year, which recorded 37.8 degree Celsius.

Cruz said the temperature this week would likely play around the 35-degree Celsius level. Last week, the average

HOTTEST/ A8

4-day gov't workweek starts April 4

By Christine O. Avendaño and Jerome Aning

IN THE next two months, national government employees will enjoy three days off from work but still get the same pay under a work scheme devised to help the country cope with surging oil prices.

President Macapagal-Arroyo was expected last night to issue an administrative order implementing a four-day workweek at all national agencies starting April 4 until the end of May. The administration adopted a similar scheme in 2002.

At a news briefing in Malacañang, energy and budget officials said the scheme would cover 70 percent of the 1.4 million employees of national government agencies.

The other 30 percent of the employees, who work with agencies rendering vital "frontline" services, will not be covered by the four-day workweek.

Exempted from the scheme are the Philippine National Police, hos-

4-DAY/ A10

Farewell, Erin Brockovich of RP journalism

By Luz Rimban and Sheila S. Coronel
Philippine Center for Investigative Journalism
and Armand Nocum

IT WAS hard to take Marlene Esperat seriously. She loved to wear mini skirts, stiletto heels and tight dresses with low necklines that revealed more than they concealed.

Every meeting with her was a sartorial shock. Her hair was dyed a different shade (her preferred hues were light brown and red) and her eye shadow was inspired by the rainbow.

Once, she appeared on a colleague's doorstep wearing glitter in her eyes.

"I want to look pretty when the assassins come to get me," she said.

On Maundy Thursday, the assassins did come.

The 45-year-old newspaper columnist was killed in cold blood, in front of her children, with a single bullet fired by a gunman who had casually walked into the living room of her home in Tacurong City in Sultan Kudarat.

Colleagues liked to call her "Erin Brockovich," after the tireless, gutsy and sexy movie heroine who made a giant utility company in the United States pay for its misdeeds. Although Esperat did not quite look like Julia Roberts, she had the attitude and the fearless in-your-face style of the filmic heroine.

More than just being a journalist, Esperat was a one-woman antigraft crusader who had sued top officials of the Department of Agriculture and the Office of the Ombudsman for graft.

Yesterday, a ranking official at the Ombudsman's office challenged the antigraft prosecution body to speed up the resolution of the cases Esperat had filed against DA executives over an alleged overprice in the 2003 purchase of P432 million worth of fertilizer.

The official, who asked not to be identified, said Esperat had worked so hard to gather evidence to back up her allegations.

FAREWELL/ A8

How NPA guerrillas lost China's support

By Ricardo S. Malay
Contributor

(Editor's Note: The author, a staff member of the pre-martial law Manila Chronicle, was involved in the Communist Party of the Philippines' arms procurement mission to China during the Marcos dictatorship.)

THREE years after the New People's Army founding on March 29, 1969, Communist Party of the Philippines chair Jose Ma. Sison decided to send a delegation to China on an arms procurement mission for the NPA. He needed no persuading that the Chinese military aid would fast-track the Maoist revolution that he was credited with single-handedly bringing into existence.

The deployment of our mission was to reveal fault lines rippling beneath the façade of China's leadership.

Under the helm of Mao Zedong, China in the 1970s had pledged to support wars of national liberation then raging in Third World countries. Shortly after his second term began, President Ferdinand Marcos, who had campaigned with the

HOW NPA/ A10

MASKED communist supporters rally in Caloocan to mark the founding of the New People's Army. (See story on Page A2.) BULLIT MARQUEZ/AP

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

TUESDAY, MARCH 29, 2005

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Second FRONTPAGE

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WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Extreme Northern Luzon will have mostly cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers while Mindanao including Palawan will experience mostly cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and thunderstorms. The rest of the country will be partly cloudy to at times cloudy with isolated rainshowers or thunderstorms

COMPILED BY: CHONA GALANG, PDI RESEARCH/06/29/05

Metro Manila	Partly Cloudy	Iloilo/Bacolod	Partly Cloudy
Baguio	Partly Cloudy	Roxas	Partly Cloudy
Tuguegarao	Partly Cloudy	Cebu	Partly Cloudy
Laoag	Cloudy with Rains	Tacloban	Partly Cloudy
Clark Zone	Partly Cloudy	Gen. Santos	Cloudy with Rains
Tagaytay	Partly Cloudy	Zamboanga	Cloudy with Rains
Legazpi	Partly Cloudy	Cagayan de Oro	Cloudy with Rains
Calapan	Partly Cloudy	Davao	Cloudy with Rains

Reds renew threat vs US targets

COMMUNIST guerrillas yesterday renewed their threat against United States troops on training missions in the Philippines, saying the deaths of American soldiers in Iraq prove they can be killed despite their superior strength.

The Communist Party of the Philippines and its armed wing, the New People's Army, accused the US government of attempting to crush the insurgency by supplying weapons and training to Filipino soldiers. The NPA marks its 36th anniversary today.

Security forces are on alert for NPA attacks that might be launched to coincide with the rebel army's 36th anniversary.

The US has about 100 soldiers in the Philippines as part of annual training exercises. Washington considers the communist rebels a terrorist organization, although there have been no attacks on US soldiers in recent years.

"The NPA is ... prepared to take the necessary actions against these foreign troops who, in fact, engage in terrorism under the pretext of anti-terrorism," the CPP said in a statement.

The guerrillas praised Iraqis "in their heroic struggle for having already killed in only two years' time more than 1,500 US troops" and wounding thousands of others.

"They can be made to bleed and die on the ground, as now demonstrated by the Iraqi people and previously by the Vietnamese and other peoples," the statement said.

In the coming years, the guerrillas said they would focus their struggle on seizing arms from government troops, including those supplied by the US. They also threatened to deploy "hit squads" in towns and cities "to deliver lethal actions" against those who assault their activists.

The CPP spokesperson, Gregorio Rosal, said in a statement the rebels would launch "more tactical offensives" this year because they needed to get more firearms from government troops.

Rosal said they were able to capture many firearms in their offensives last year.

Military spokesperson Lt. Col. Buenaventura Pascual belittled the rebel threat as an "empty boast," saying the guerrillas did not have the capability to take on the military or US soldiers, who have their own security shield.

"They can only take on very remote military detachments and police stations, which they think have less chances of repelling their treacherous attacks," he said.

He noted that US troops recently traveled to Quezon province, where the guerrillas are active, to undertake humanitarian projects.

Pascual also denied Rosal's claim that the joint Philippine military exercises held in Central Luzon were designed to allow US soldiers to take part in the government's anti-insurgency campaign.

"The AFP strongly denies Rosal's claim that the US forces' presence in Laguna and Quezon are intended for offensive military operations," Pascual said, adding that the US soldiers also undertook engineering, medical and dental missions.

Senior Supt. Leopoldo Bataoil, spokesperson of the Philippine National Police, said the people would be angered by the NPA's threats to stage attacks.

"This is one thing that is not pro-people, pro-God and pro-nation," Bataoil said.

He said the police was ready for any such actions, "but we want to be proactive in our action against these threats of the CPP-NPA by way of asking the people's support. We ask the people to report to us early on any planned attack so we can respond accordingly."

Last year, the communist rebels suspended peace talks with the government to protest the government's refusal to push US and European officials to remove the guerrillas from their lists of terrorist organizations.

The military estimates that as of last year, the NPA had 8,240 men. Despite military offensives, the CPP said it has a presence in nearly 70 of the Philippines' 79 provinces.

Meanwhile, two communist insurgents were killed in a fierce firefight with soldiers in Davao Oriental province, officials said yesterday.

The fighting erupted Saturday near the town of Davao Oriental when NPA gunmen ambushed patrolling soldiers, said regional army commander Maj. Gen. Samuel Bagasin.

Two NPA rebels were killed, Bagasin said.

Two insurgents also surrendered voluntarily over the weekend to the military in Agusan del Sur province. The duo were being interrogated at an Army base in the province. *AP, with reports from Dona Pazzibugan, Luige del Puerto and AFP*

CPP urged to rethink armed struggle policy

INITAO, Misamis Oriental—Two former communist cadres have urged the Communist Party of the Philippines to rethink its strategy of using armed struggle solely as the means to achieve its goal of a national democratic revolution.

Instead, the party should use the democratic space to advance a pro-people agenda, said Diego San Pedro and Bernardo Kasilak, once ranking CPP cadres who left in the early 1990s at the height of an internal party squabble over questions of strategy and tactics.

San Pedro formerly operated in central and western Mindanao while Kasilak was assigned to central and northern Mindanao.

The two are now part of the new Partido ng Manggagawang Pilipino (PMP), which was formed with the merger of the original PMP, the Partido Proletario Demokratiko (PPD), and the Sosyalistang Partido ng Paggawa (SPP) two years ago.

They each have spent more than two decades in the revolutionary cause, at least a dozen years of which were with the CPP.

"The context for an armed revolution today is widely different than when it was first waged 36 years ago," Kasilak said in an interview.

The New People's Army, the armed wing of the CPP, observes its 36th anniversary today, celebrating its gradual recovery of lost guerrilla zones and reestablishment of mass bases in the hinterlands, especially in western Mindanao region.

Kasilak explained that, particularly in the context of Mindanao, the rural landscape has changed so much as to put into question the viability of establishing guerrilla strength in the countryside to match the military strength of the state.

The NPA has adopted the classic Maoist guerrilla strategy of encircling the cities from the countryside, that is, building strength from the hinterland communities where the state has a weak presence then bolstering this military strength as the principal instrument for seizing political power.

San Pedro said the prolonged economic crisis that has afflicted the rural economy for many years has led to the migration of the rural population into urban centers in search of better socio-economic opportunities.

He said this had the effect of depleting the source of the forces needed for the armed struggle that is to be waged in the classic Maoist sense.

Another trend, according to San Pedro, is the incursion of large development projects into hinterland communities, such as the agricultural plantations "which are backed by practically the entire state machinery."

Ryan D. Rosauro, PDI Mindanao Bureau

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Car bombing plot foiled, says AFP

TERRORISTS had planned to carry out car bombings in Metro Manila during the Holy Week but were thwarted with the arrest of a Muslim convert and seizure of his explosives cache, the military confirmed yesterday.

The explosives seized from an apartment in Fairview, Quezon City last Wednesday were to be used for the car bombs, said Capt. Ramon Zagala II, spokesperson of the Armed Forces National Capital Region Command (NCRCom).

"Their plans (called for) a car bombing...but this was aborted because of the arrest, because of the capture of their explosives," said Zagala, referring to the arrest last week of Tyrone Santos, who goes by the Muslim name of Daud Santos, in an apartment in Cubao, Quezon City.

Santos' capture led military intelligence agents to a safehouse in Fairview, Quezon City where they seized 10 sacks of explosive materials, 18 canisters of improvised explosive devices, a computer and several video tapes.

Santos is the brother of Ahmed Santos, the leader of the Rajah Solaiman Movement, a group of Islam converts associated with the Abu Sayyaf kidnap gang which authorities have linked to the al-Qaida international terror network.

The Abu Sayyaf intended to use the explosives in bombings in the capital during the Holy Week but Santos' arrest prevented this, said Zagala.

He said the military believed the extremists were planning a car bombing due to information gathered from computer files, documents, a videotape and the interrogation of Santos. He would not elaborate.

Following Santos' arrest and the seizure of the explosives cache, the military has downgraded its alert from blue to red over possible terror attacks in Manila, said Zagala.

"I'm not saying there's no more threat. That will always be there. But the threat has diminished," Zagala said.

He said intelligence agents were still hunting the rest of Santos' group. He confirmed reports that military intelligence units were going after at least two more terrorist cells in Metro Manila. *Dona Pazzibugan and AFP*

No confirmation yet of RP insurgents killed in Iraq

By Volt Contreras

PHILIPPINE officials in Baghdad have yet to confirm reports that Filipinos were among the 85 persons killed in last Tuesday's US-backed assault on a suspected rebel training camp in Iraq, the Department of Foreign Affairs yesterday said.

DFA spokesperson Gilberto Asuque said Manila representatives led by Undersecretary Rafael Seguis and charge d'affaires Ricardo Endaya have inquired with the Iraqi interior ministry, which in turn still awaits a formal report from Iraqi field commanders privy to the raid.

"It's easy to say for someone that an Asian-looking person is of a certain country," Asuque said in a briefing. "But for us in the Philippine Embassy (in Iraq) we have specific documents to establish the identity, and the passport is only one of them."

He said prior to the raid, the DFA has not received any report of Filipinos joining or supporting insurgents in Iraq. However, Filipinos were known to have fought in Afghanistan against the Soviets in the 1980s. Among them were Muslim separatist insurgents who later formed the Abu Sayyaf.

An estimated 6,500 Filipinos are believed to be working in Iraq, mostly in US military camps, despite a current ban on their deployment in that country.

Asuque declined to discuss measures being readied by the DFA in the event that Filipino involvement in the insurgency movement in a post-Saddam Iraq is verified.

A confirmation could pose new concerns for Manila's Team Iraq, which is led by Seguis and whose main task for the past five months was to secure the release of Roberto Tarongoy, a Filipino accountant seized by Iraqi militants last November.

Reports quoting an Iraqi general said 85 militants—a mix of Iraqis, Filipinos, Algerians, Moroccans, Afghans and Arabs from neighboring countries—were killed March 23 in a strike on a rebel training camp by the shore of Lake Tharthar in Central Iraq.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

PNP sets up big security plan for IPU assembly

By Luige A. del Puerto

THE SECURITY that the police are preparing for a gathering of foreign lawmakers in the country in April will be even tighter than what was in place during the Holy Week.

The police said they are treating the International Parliamentary Union as if it were a gathering of heads of state—like the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation.

"This will be like the Apec (Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation) summit in 1996," declared Police Deputy Director Avelino Razon, chief of the National Capital Region Police Office.

Faced with a "drastically reduced" but lingering threat of a terrorist attack, particularly bombings, from the Abu Sayyaf, the Philippine National Police's top man said he also expects the worst.

"Our principle is to expect for the worst and hope for the best," PNP chief Director General Arturo Lomibao said.

He said the IPU is the next major activity of the PNP. He added that security preparations will continue even after the event.

"The police will take all forms of threats very seriously," he said. The country cannot afford to be embarrassed, he added.

"We will provide the maximum possible security especially because this is an international convention, and we have to show the world that we are capable of providing adequate security," Lomibao said.

Delegates to the 112th Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) assembly in Manila started arriving last week, but instead of staying in hotels in the metropolis, many of them headed to the provinces to see more of the country. Some 1,500 parliamentarians are expected to attend the event. The IPU meeting starts April 3 at the Philippine International Convention Center.

Threats will most likely come from "traditional enemies of state," but mainly from the Abu Sayyaf Group, according to Chief Supt. Ismael Rafanan, head of the police's Intelligence Group.

He clarified however that there was no specific threat from any group.

It helps that the United States is not a member of the IPU, he said.

"The United States is not a member, and that drastically reduces security problems," Rafanan said. "Of course, that does not exclude the possibility of a terrorist attack. But so far, we have gathered no specific threat to the event."

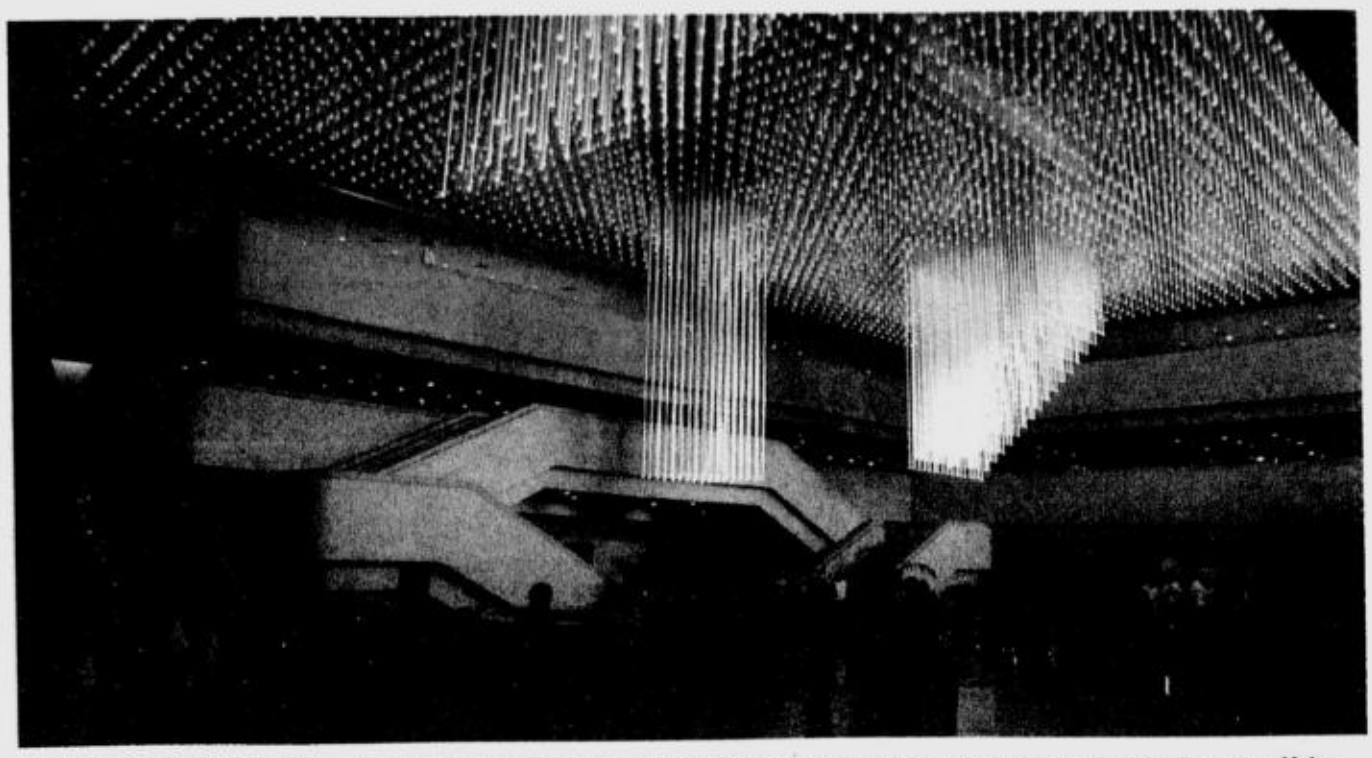
But other members of the "coalition of the willing"—a group of nations that supported the US's invasion of Iraq but did not necessarily send in troops—will attend the IPU meeting. They include Israel, Singapore and Thailand, Rafanan said.

But what is expected are protest actions from some of the country's militant groups, the intelligence official said.

Besides carrying out bombings, the Abu Sayyaf is also known for kidnappings. Four years ago, the group snatched tourists from nearby Malaysia and brought them to the Philippines. Although local officials never admitted it, it was widely reported that the foreigners were released only after a hefty ransom was paid.

Razon said police are now undertaking "daily conferences" to ensure the safety of IPU participants, Razon said.

At any given time, there will be 11,700 policemen and soldiers guarding the streets of Metro Manila during the conferences.



THE LOBBY of the Philippine International Convention Center glitters with lights as it awaits delegates to the International Parliamentary Union.

Palace shrugs off new coup talk

By Gil Cabacungan

MALACAÑANG is taking in stride the latest rumors of a coup d'etat and military junta that it considers passe like yesterday's news.

Communication Director Silvestre Afable said coup rumors have become outmoded and that the public has shunned them based on opinion polls.

"We can see in the past surveys of any organization that the people have rejected a military junta, coup d'etat or any kind of military adventurism. That is not fashionable in our system in this era of a full and strong democracy," said Afable in an interview with reporters yesterday.

Afable was commenting on warnings of an imminent military uprising aired by top security aides of former President Fidel V. Ramos—retired Gen. Jose Almonte and Fortunato Abat.

Afable not only consider these warnings old hat, he also raised doubts on whether these warnings were made by the loyal aides of Ramos, an ally of President Macapagal-Arroyo.

"I am not aware if they said these. I also don't believe that General Almonte would even say things like that," Afable said.

While he was not too close with Abat, Afable said: "I know he served under a democratic regime in the past and I don't think he would subscribe to undemocratic means toward the transition of power."

Afable said the issues raised for the supposed reason for coup plots would not hold water at this time when the country has strong economic growth and stable political environment.

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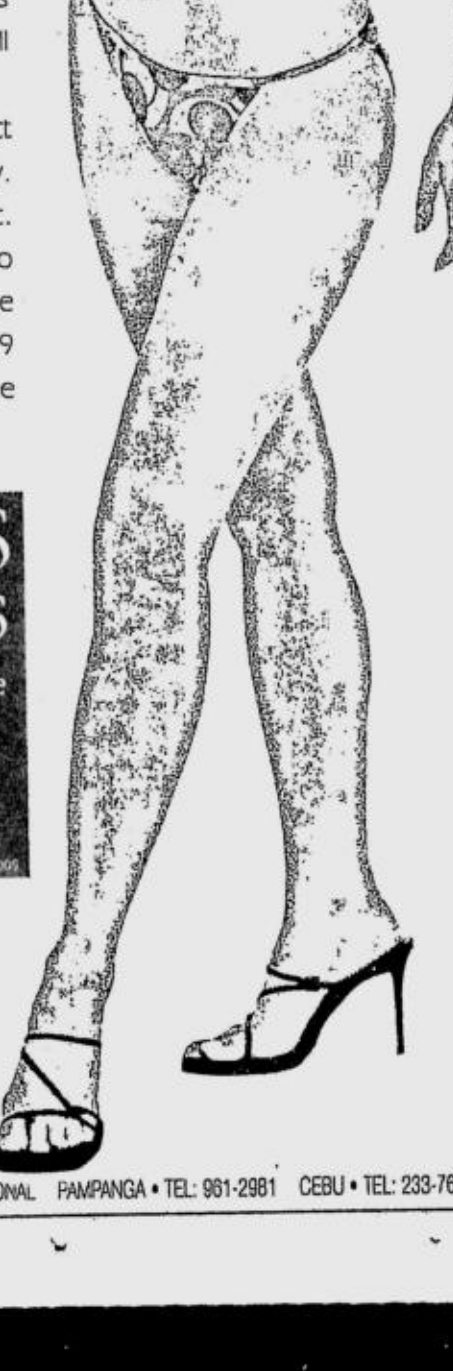

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Raw water fee not a tax, says exec

Plan claimed to have minimal effect on the poor

By Leila B. Salaverria

THE PROPOSED raw water pricing of the National Water Resources Board is a regulatory mechanism and will not need legislation to get it off the ground.

NWRB executive director Ramon Alikpala made this clarification yesterday amid speculations that the proposal would be a form of taxation.

"It is a regulatory mechanism to promote the efficiency of water use. We are allowed to impose regulatory fees," Alikpala said yesterday during a forum at the Manila Hotel.

He said if the proposal was implemented, there would be adjustments in the billing of raw water and permits obtained from the NWRB.

Raw water pricing is the charging of fees for the use of water from the ground, rivers, lakes and other resources.

Alikpala defended the proposal, saying it will have a minimal effect on the poor and will tremendously benefit the country's water source protection projects.

He also said it would compel heavy raw water users, including utilities, to do their share in conserving the dwindling resource.

Alikpala cited golf courses where large amounts of water are used to maintain the grounds.

"(Operators of) golf courses do not pay for water. They extract water; they abuse the source. They only spend for the electricity used for deep wells. It's annoying, isn't it? You have to make them give something back to the watershed. They have to conserve water," he said.

Alikpala said earnings from the raw water pricing would be used to fund projects like water conservation campaigns, reforestation, irrigation, water recycling and the improvement of water connections for the poor.

"Whatever funds we make will go back to the source," he said.

The 10 to 15-centavo per cubic meter charge for raw water would translate to only a P3 increase in the monthly water bill, Alikpala said.

One cubic meter of water is approximately five drums. A normal family of six in Metro Manila uses an average of 30 cubic meters of water a month.

"If there's a price for raw water use, people are more likely to conserve water," he said.

Alikpala also expressed apprehension that farmers in Bulacan and Pampanga would not get enough water for irrigation in the next cropping season which starts in June.

"Our concern is for the the second cropping season because the water level of Angat is still declining. Angat will be servicing Metro Manila, and its water level has to reach 180 meters by mid-June so that we could provide water to farmers," he told reporters.

Currently, farmers who were able to plant crops receive 25 cubic meters per second of water. The NWRB will decrease this amount next month in preparation for the harvest season in June.

Alikpala also called on Metro Manila residents to conserve water even as he assured them that their supply will remain adequate in the next few months with the recent clearing of the Umiray tunnel.

Reacting to a comment about residents of exclusive villages who use a large amount of water for their lawns and gardens, Alikpala said the subdivisions could start monitoring their water usage as a group.

He said the usual water consumption of a subdivision household is 100 to 120 cubic meters a month, while a normal household consumes 30 cubic meters in the same period.

Start rehab work now, DENR tells Marcopper

By Blanche S. Rivera

THE DEPARTMENT of Environment and Natural Resources yesterday reiterated its call for Marcopper Mining Corp. and its Canadian partner Placer Dome Inc. to start rehabilitation of their former mining site in Sta. Cruz, Marinduque.

Environment Secretary Michael Defensor said the recommendations detailed in a US Geological Society (USGS) study commissioned by the Philippine government last year should be immediately executed.

At least 295,000 cubic meters of mine tailings are still deposited in the Boac and Makulapnit rivers, the DENR said.

Some 1.6 million cubic meters of mine tailings were dumped into the two rivers when the dam holding four million cubic meters of waste from Marcopper's mine sites broke in March 1996.

In its "Marinduque Environmental and Health Study," the USGS stressed the importance of addressing the problems in the remaining infrastructures to prevent further harm to the communities.

"Rehabilitation and other remedial measures should be done immediately to ensure that the 1996 environmental accident in the area will not be repeated and to protect public health and safety in the area," Defensor said.

The Marinduque Council for Environmental Concerns, however, has expressed doubts that the mining companies would actually heed the DENR order.

The group said that Marcopper has received numerous orders from the local and national government to fulfill its commitment to rehabilitate the rivers but it has repeatedly ignored the orders without being sanctioned.

Marinduque's San Antonio mine site has been identified as one of the national government's 23 priority mine sites to be developed in the Philippines after the Supreme Court ruled that foreign companies can explore the potential mine fields.

CHEd backs Roxas proposal to regulate school ads

By Alcuin Papa

THE COMMISSION on Higher Education said it would support the proposal to ban schools from taking out print ads in newspapers and magazines without obtaining approval from the commission.

CHEd National Capital Region Director Amelia Biglete said the rule would prevent students from enrolling in schools not accredited by the commission.

The proposal, according to Sen. Mar Roxas, would prevent students from enrolling in "dubious schools" or diploma mills and would promote "truth in advertising."

Roxas said schools would be required to submit their proposed ads to CHEd so the commission could verify if they had the necessary permits to offer the courses.

Biglete said a "screening committee" for school advertisements would save students the inconvenience of enrolling in schools not accredited by CHEd.

She said CHEd was willing to work with the Advertising Board of the Philippines which could furnish a copy of the ads before publication in newspapers.

HOW MUCH?

Palawan solon hits 'stealthy' gov't sale of Malampaya shares

By Philip C. Tubeza

REVEAL the price.

Palawan Rep. Abraham Mitra yesterday criticized the government's sale of half of its shares in the Malampaya deep water gas-to-power project without disclosing the price of the sale.

Mitra scored the "the stealth and the speed" by which government sold 49 percent of its 10-percent stake in the Malampaya deep water gas-to-power project to a Korean consortium led by LG International Corp. (LGI) last week.

"To blaring trumpets, the Committee on Privatization announced last week it was approving the sale of a part of Philippine National Oil Co.-Exploration Corp.'s (PNOC-EC) share in the Malampaya project. But it forgot to mention one thing: the price," Mitra said.

"Without the price, there is no way by which PNOC-EC's claim that it got a good price for the shares could be verified. A part of the national patrimony was sold and we should not rely on the mere say-so of a board that it was not for a song," he said.

As a follow-up to the CoP approval, the PNOC-EC disclosed before the Philippine Stock Exchange before the bourse closed for the Holy Week holidays that its board had approved the terms and conditions of the sale. However, the price was again not mentioned.

"The most important fact in that transaction—the price—was curiously left out. It's like a man taking a full page ad about his impending marriage but without telling who his bride is," Mitra said.

"We will have to see if this privatization is a bigger tearjerker than the Korean telenovelas we see. We do not want us to be holding the proverbial empty bag, and weep for the foregone revenues and for a debt that will end up as government liability," he said.

PNOC said the price could not be disclosed yet as the other members of the Malampaya consortium can still challenge the Korean group's offer.

Shell Philippines Exploration BV (SPEX) and Chevron-Texaco Philippines each have a 45-percent stake in the Malampaya project, which produces natural gas in a deep-sea well off Palawan province and transports it via an underwater pipeline to Batangas province.

PNOC-EC said SPEX and Chevron-Texaco could exercise their option of matching the offer of the LG group. If after 15 days upon receipt of information on the sale no counteroffer is made, the sale to LG International will be deemed final, PNOC officials said.

The LG International-led consortium is composed of Korea Gas Corp., Seoul City Gas Co. and Dae Sung Industrial.

Privatizing PNOC-EC's interest in Malampaya was one of the conditions that the national government set for the state firm in 1999 when it was given full guarantee on a $175-million loan which it used to buy into the consortium.

But instead of selling its whole 10-percent stake, Energy and Finance officials opted to auction off 4.9 percent, a move, they claimed, would trim PNOC-EC's debt yet allow it to still draw dividends from the project and finance other explorations.

Mitra recalled that the move to privatize a portion of PNOC's Malampaya holdings has been "bedeviled with controversies."

In August last year, a member of the LG consortium, Korea Gas, jumped the gun on what was supposed to be an open bidding when it announced in Singapore that it was the Philippine government's "preferred bidder" for the PNOC shares.

Korea Gas gas told Reuters then that the sale value was in the vicinity of $200 million.

That price, Mitra then said, bore the hallmarks of a "fire sale."

"It is a *baratilyo* sale, in *ukay-ukay* prices, of a goose that lays the golden egg," he added.

Corrections

IN THE MARCH 20 issue, the caption of a photo accompanying the article, "It's time for Filipinos to make money," on Page B1 of the SundayBiz section misspelled the name of the project director of Global Entrepreneurship Network Philippines. The correct spelling of the project director's name is Danilo Mante—not Marte.

* * *

IN YESTERDAY'S issue, the Pride of Place column of Augusto Villalon on Page C1 of the Lifestyle section misspelled the name of the waterfalls in Cebu's Badian town. The town's tourist attraction is the Kawasan—not Kayasan—Falls.

* * *

Readers may send their requests for correction of factual errors in writing to Gerry Lirio, city editor, Philippine Daily Inquirer, PDI Building, Chino Roces Avenue corner Mascardo Street, Makati City; fax Nos. 897-4793/94; e-mail addresses:glirio@inquirer.com.ph and daydesk@inquirer.com.ph.

Complaints about lack of fairness or objectivity may be sent to Raul Palabrica, readers' advocate, the same address and fax numbers as those of the city editor, and e-mail address:rpalabrica@inquirer.com.ph.

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Tuesday, March 29, 2005
Octave of Easter, Tuesday

1st Reading: Acts 2:36-41
Gospel: John 20:11-18

Mary stood weeping outside the tomb, and as she wept she bent down to look inside; she saw two angels in white sitting where the body of Jesus had been, one at the head, and the other at the feet. They said, "Woman, why are you weeping?" She answered, "Because they have taken my Lord and I don't know where they have put him."

As she said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not recognize him. Jesus said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping? Who are you looking for?" She thought it was the gardener and answered him, "Lord, if you have taken him away, tell me where you have put him, and I will go and remove him."

Jesus said to her, "Mary." She turned and said to him, "Rabboni"—which means, Master. Jesus said to her, "Do not cling to me; you see I have not yet ascended to the Father. But go to my brothers and say to them: I am ascending to my Father, who is your Father, to my God, who is your God."

So Mary of Magdala went and announced to the disciples, "I have seen the Lord, and this is what he said to me."

Commentary

Now Mary has stayed behind after Peter and the Beloved Disciple have returned to the others and she weeps, disconsolate over the loss of the body of her Master. Even though she sees angels (she does not go into the tomb which symbolizes baptism) and she even hears Jesus questioning her on why she is weeping and who she is looking for, she does not recognize him. Why? She is so bound to finding his dead body and clinging to her old life, and relationship to him that she cannot see that he is before her—and that he is much more than she ever knew him to be. He tells her that he is not hers—that he is going to ascend to his Father and her Father, to his God and her God and that she must let go of what she once had with him—for there is so much more being offered to her. Do we get lost in what was, what we had or wanted and cannot see that our God is offering us so much more in the Risen Lord and resurrection life. Time to let go of tears and what was—our lives belong to the Risen Lord and to the Father in the power of the Spirit.

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Stanley Ho's return said to have Chinoy's backing

By Philip C. Tubeza

AFTER a failed bid during the administration of Joseph Estrada, controversial Macau gambling mogul Stanley Ho may finally be on his way to starting casino operations in the Philippines.

Ilocos Norte Rep. Imee Marcos yesterday claimed that Ho was "well on his way to gobbling up the lion's share" of casino operations in the country with the reopening of his mothballed $600-million Jumbo Palace Floating Restaurant on Manila Bay in May.

Ho had tried to open the floating restaurant during the Estrada administration but was forced to abort his plans due to the strong opposition of the Catholic Church, which claimed that it was a front for Ho's casino operations.

This time, however, Ho reportedly has the backing of an influential Chinese-Filipino businessman and former ambassador in gaining a new foothold in the local gaming industry, Marcos said.

"The former ambassador has called in favors owed him by powerful people in Malacañang and the Church to ensure that Ho would have a smooth reentry into the country's casino operations," Marcos said.

Marcos urged the Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corp. (Pagcor) to disclose its dealings with Ho's alleged associates Lin Wei Cheng and Cheng Yu-tung.

She said Cheng was the new owner of the former Hyatt Regency Hotel along Roxas Boulevard, which is presently undergoing renovation prior to its launching as the Hyatt Hotel and Casino Manila.

The renovated hotel's casino would cover 15,000 square meters, or three times the size of Pagcor's flagship casino at the Manila Pavilion, Marcos said.

She said Cheng is expected to rake in at least $43 million a year based on a 40-60 split in revenues with Pagcor, assuming that the Hyatt casino would be as profitable as the Manila Pavilion casino.

"This early, expectations are that the Hyatt operations would be a whole lot bigger," she said.

Marcos also sought a congressional investigation into the recent influx of slot machine operators with whom Pagcor had reportedly signed 60-40 revenue-sharing schemes, "in apparent violation of its charter that sets private investors' income to a maximum of only 10 percent."

"These deals will bleed the government of billions at a time when the public is being squeezed for more tax revenues," Marcos said.

"Pagcor has waltzed around the law by using these lease contracts of slot machines which are, for all intents and purposes, a grant of sub-franchises. Pagcor has in fact usurped the power of Congress," she said.

PINOYS AMONG NABBED FISHERMEN
Pakistani authorities arrest 73 Asian crew members, including 38 Filipinos, of two Indian-registered trawlers caught illegally fishing in Pakistan's waters. The two trawlers were loaded with some 70 tons of tuna. It was not known what has become of the fishermen.

Exec says Marcos ill-gotten funds may not cover land reform plan

By Blanche S. Rivera

THE GOVERNMENT may not have enough money to purchase the remaining 721,000 hectares of land covered by the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program.

Land Reform Secretary Rene Villa said the money so far recovered from the alleged ill-gotten wealth of former President Ferdinand Marcos—which under the law is to be used for the CARP—was not enough to cover the land acquisition.

The government hopes to distribute 130,000 hectares a year to tillers under the CARP.

Villa said during a recent dialogue with farmers' groups at the DLR that the agency had already spent P8.8 billion of Marcos' alleged ill-gotten wealth for CARP.

"The estimate is the Marcos wealth will last us only until 2006 because the cost of land acquisition is high, especially since the remaining lands are mostly sugar plantations," Villa said.

He said the Department of Budget and Management should not consider the Marcos wealth as part of the budget of the DLR but as funds for land acquisition.

"The Marcos wealth should be an augmentation; it should not be treated as a regular budget," he said.

Villa said he was also asking international donors who are helping support the local agrarian reform program not to be too project-specific to allow for flexibility in the use of their donations.

The CARP law will be in effect until 2008, which is why the government is working double-time to acquire all the lands that had been identified for land reform, Villa said.

These lands total 721,000 hectares, excluding properties in Basilan and Lanao del Norte.

"If we're not able to finish this by 2008, it could cause some legal problems. The rich could always say the CARP law was effective only up to 2008, unless Congress amends it," Villa said.

He said the government was also reviewing the effectiveness of the stock distribution option (SDO) in the 13 agrarian reform communities that preferred this mode of ownership to outright owning the land to see if it really benefited the farmer-beneficiaries.

Graft-buster seeks new laws

OMBUDSMAN Simeon Marcelo yesterday called on Congress to pass laws that would allow his office to look into the bank accounts of government officials and tap the telephone conversations of suspected grafters.

Marcelo told the INQUIRER that relaxing bank secrecy and wire tapping laws in favor of the Office of the Ombudsman would help reduce, if not eradicate, graft practices in government.

"Such laws would give more teeth to the government's campaign against graft and corruption," he said.

Marcelo said granting such powers to the Ombudsman would not lead to the trampling of the citizens' right to privacy since these would not be used against private individuals or entities.

He said government officials, especially elected ones, and employees are accountable to the public. Thus, they could not invoke any right to privacy, especially for acts done in the performance of their duties.

Marcelo said armed with the authority to examine bank accounts and tap telephone conversations would help Ombudsman investigators pin down grafters in government. At the least, he added, it would make it easier to conduct individual lifestyle checks on government officials, which normally take four months to complete.

Marcelo further said his office needed more funds, 200 prosecutors and at least 2,000 investigators to wage a successful anticorruption campaign. He said limited resources and the insufficient number of prosecutors and investigators have handicapped the campaign.

He noted that unlike in Hong Kong, where anti-corruption institutions were adequately manned and funded, the Office of the Ombudsman was surviving on a string budget, 62 overworked prosecutors handling more than 2,000 graft cases before the Sandiganbayan and 88 similarly overworked investigators.

"Some prosecutors have already fallen ill because of too much workload. That is why we need all the help we can get from the private sector," Marcelo said.

The Office of the Ombudsman receives at least 13,000 graft complaints every year. Out of this number, only about 260 "promising cases" are investigated due to the lack of investigators.

"For the time being we ask the public to conduct their own investigation if possible before filing graft cases in our office," Marcelo said.

Marcelo also expressed gratitude to the European Union for providing P2.9 million for the Ombudsman's anti-corruption and graft prevention programs.

Nelson F. Flores

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Prosecution: Erap lawyers running out of witnesses

By Nelson F. Flores

STATE prosecutors yesterday claimed that the lawyers of detained former President Joseph Estrada were running out of witnesses after the defense managed to present only one witness during the continuation of Estrada's plunder trial at the Sandiganbayan yesterday.

Special Prosecutor Dennis Villa-Ignacio said the defense panel failed to live up to their promise to present three witnesses during yesterday's proceedings.

"It appears that they no longer have any credible witness to present. I won't be surprised if they present a *taho* vendor on the witness stand sooner or later," Villa-Ignacio said.

But defense lawyer Cleofe Berzola disputed Villa Ignacio's claim that the defense panel was running out of witnesses. "We have more to present," she insisted.

Berzola promised to bring them to court tomorrow, the next scheduled trial date for Estrada's plunder case.

She blamed the recent turmoil in Taguig as the main reason for the failure of their Muslim witnesses to be present during yesterday's hearing.

Berzola said it would be difficult for the court to issue subpoenas to their witnesses since she did not know their addresses.

"I can only contact them through cellular phone," Berzola said. "But we will present them on Wednesday."

At yesterday's hearing, defense witnesses, Sohayle Haji Abdul Racman Abdullah Maranghit testified that he was a scholar of the Erap Muslim Youth Foundation for the school year 2004-05.

But Villa-Ignacio said that Maranghit's testimony was irrelevant because it had no bearing on the illegal acts allegedly committed by Estrada prior to the filing of the plunder case against him, since Maranghit became an EMYF scholar only in 2004.

Villa-Ignacio said he was willing to admit and stipulate that the EMYF had scholars for the years 2003, 2004 and 2005 but none in 2000, 2001 and 2002.

Berzola, however, said Villa-Ignacio was wrong to claim that the testimonies of their witnesses were irrelevant.

Berzola explained that the recent activities of the EMYF were just a continuation of its program that was started in 2000 but unfortunately interrupted also in the same year.

She noted that the inability of the EMYF to function in the past three years was due to factors beyond the foundation's control.

"The organization was in hiatus for three years," Berzola said.

Now Miriam takes aim at fat kids

By Juliet Labog-Javellana

IS your child obese? Then you might be part of the problem.

According to Sen. Miriam Defensor-Santiago, obesity among young people is becoming more prevalent, particularly among preschool and elementary school students.

"You look around, there are so many overweight and obese children," Santiago said.

She said it was for this reason that she hoped to remedy the situation through a bill she had filed in the Senate.

Her proposed Senate Bill No. 1902, or the Childhood Obesity Reduction Act of 2005, would encourage schools to develop and implement programs designed to reduce and prevent childhood obesity, promote increased physical activity, and improve nutritional choices.

Santiago also proposed the establishment of a Congressional Council on Childhood Obesity, which would see to it that all elementary and secondary schools carried out the comprehensive health program she had proposed.

The council shall be composed of the majority and minority leaders of the Senate, the Speaker and the minority leader of the House and four private citizens to be appointed, she said.

She said her bill would likewise call for the creation of a National Foundation for the Prevention and Reduction of Childhood Obesity, which would carry out activities for the prevention and reduction of childhood obesity also through school-based activities.

Reyes wants oil barges monitored

INTERIOR Secretary Angelo Reyes has asked the Department of Transportation and Communication to monitor the movement of oil barges in the country's waterways to curb the smuggling of petroleum products.

Reyes, also chief of the National Anti-Smuggling Task Force, asked the DOTC to look into the feasibility of regulating the movement of barges from all over the country during a Cabinet Oversight Committee on Anti-Smuggling meeting.

"If the movement of barges is controlled then it will be easy for us to detect and apprehend those (out-of-line) barges... which are more often than not involved in oil smuggling," Reyes said.

Oil smuggling has been blamed for the P9 billion drop in fuel tax revenues from 1998 to 2003. The sharp decline happened while there was a drastic increase in the number of car registrations, from more than 3.5 billion units to almost 4.3 billion units.

DOTC Undersecretary Bobby Brillantes said he will form a committee to discuss Reyes' request for a control mechanism on barge transports in the country.

The committee is expected to include representatives from the Philippine Ports Authority, Coast Guard, Maritime Police and the Maritime Industry Authority.

"Fuel smuggling is a big problem that is depriving the government of additional revenues at a time when additional revenues are very much needed by the government," Reyes said. *Norman Bordadora*

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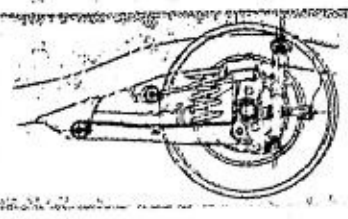

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Farewell, Erin Brockovich of RP journalism

From page A1

"She gave her all for these cases," he said, noting that Esperat not only spent her own money to travel from Sultan Kudarat to Manila, but even earned death threats.

Assistant Ombudsman Ernesto Nocos said the graft complaint against Agriculture Secretary Arthur Yap, former DA Undersecretary Jocelyn Bolante and several others did not die with Esperat.

Suspects with pimples

"We will dispose of the case depending on the evidence she presented in court," Nocos told the INQUIRER.

Two men with pimples on their faces are being hunted by the authorities, said Chief Supt. Antonio Billones, chief of the Central Mindanao Police.

Police released an artist's sketches of the two suspects. Pimples on their faces figured prominently in the sketches.

"The children who described them said they have many pimples on their faces, and it is possible they were describing just one person," Billones said.

The first suspect, an alias "Jake," is 29 to 33 years old, 5'2" to 5'4" tall, and 57 to 58 kg, one of the sketches said.

Jake is said to have acted as the lookout.

The second suspect, the alleged gunman, is 25 to 27 years old, 5'4" to 5'5" tall, and 60 to 65 kg. He carried a 3210 Nokia mobile phone with a black case.

Not an attack on freedom

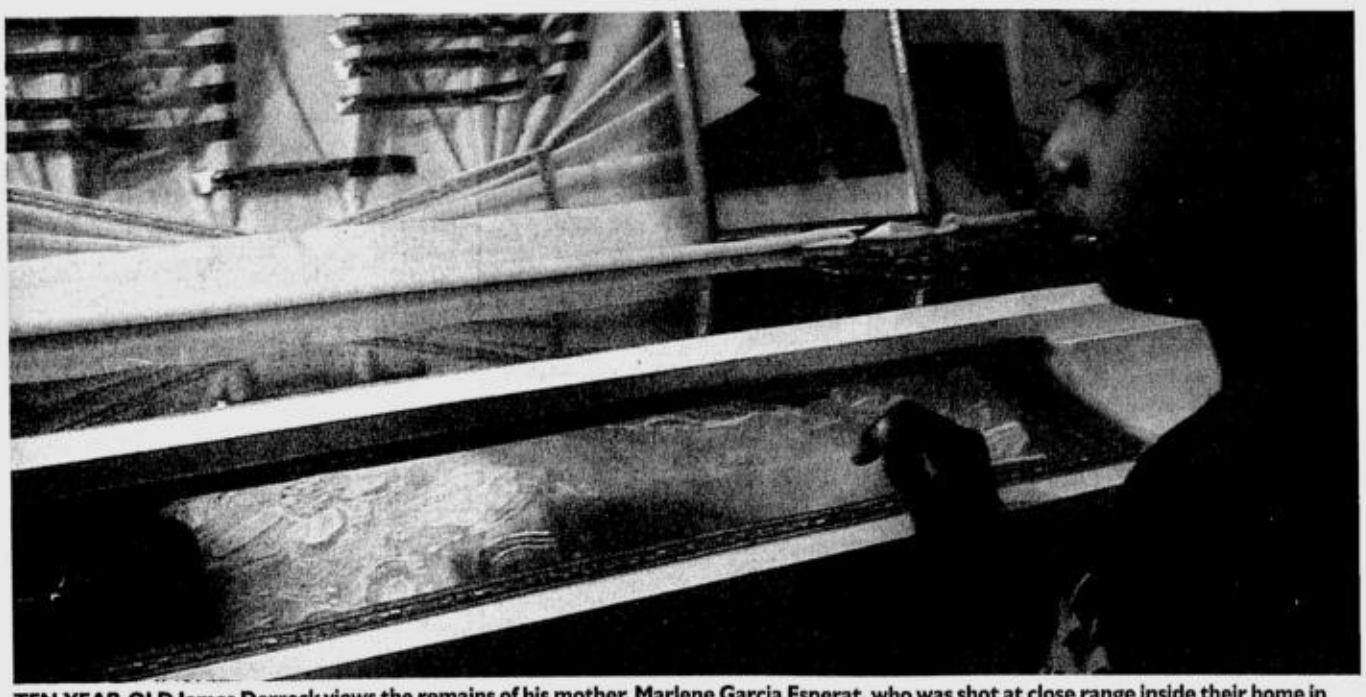
Interior Secretary Angelo Reyes rejected as "clearly without basis" allegations by several media groups that the killing of journalists was part of a "culture of violence" tolerated by some officials.

"While it is true that some media personalities and organizations have reported about the activities of alleged death squads or vigilante groups in some places, there is no evidence showing that such activities have been sanctioned by the mayor or other local authorities," Reyes said.

The March 21 issue of Time magazine quoted Reyes as saying that the killing of reporters on account of their own allegedly corrupt practices should not be seen as an attack on press freedom.

"[If] they were killed or threatened because of those activities, and not because they were crusading journalists, then I don't think that is a crime against freedom of expression," Time quoted him as saying.

Senate Majority Leader Francisco Pangilinan condemned the killing of Esperat, warning that unless the murderers were caught, similar killings would continue.



TEN-YEAR-OLD James Derreck views the remains of his mother, Marlene Garcia Esperat, who was shot at close range inside their home in Tacurong City, Sultan Kudarat. JOEY R.B. LOZANO / CONTRIBUTOR

Palace concerned

Esperat was the fourth Filipino journalist murdered this year after 13 were killed in the country in 2004, making the Philippines one of the world's most dangerous places for the press after Iraq.

The Paris-based global press watchdog, Reporters Without Borders, said it would send a fact-finding team to the Philippines on April 7-13 to investigate the deaths of the journalists.

"The Palace is very concerned about this incident," President Macapagal-Arroyo's communications director, Silvestre Afable, said of Esperat's slaying.

Esperat had worked as an assistant to the resident ombudsman of the DA in Manila before leaving the service due to what she told the INQUIRER was her "disillusionment" with the government's inability to fight graft.

She later joined the media, finding it a better vehicle for her crusade.

Righteous rage

She was determined and tireless. She was driven by righteous rage—she had seen how money that should otherwise have been used to better the lot of farmers was instead being siphoned off to enrich bureaucrats and politicians.

She dug up evidence to show that the government was pouring in millions for a nonexistent irrigation project in Cotabato. She also found documents alleging that a bureau under the DA had rigged the bidding process to buy overpriced speedboats.

In the last 10 years, Esperat had filed dozens of cases ranging from the smuggling of agricultural products to the overpricing of farm inputs and the diversion to private pockets or political uses of funds intended for farmers.

She knew of dangers

Esperat knew she was stepping on the toes of powerful people and that being a whistle-blower in this country was a thankless and dangerous job.

She was well aware that killers were hot on her trail.

"Is this how we reward and protect whistle-blowers?" Marlene asked in 2001. "It would be some consolation if the cases were moving and the accused jailed. But most of the time, that's wishful thinking."

She was an unlikely candidate to lead a one-woman crusade to clean up the DA. After all, she was a chemist, and when she wasn't talking about the goings-on at the DA, she would lecture about the health benefits of various herbs or marvel at the new technology in forensic medicine.

A scientist

She was really a scientist, and so she attacked corruption scientifically. She had a list of sources and could recite them from memory if she wanted to.

Like Erin Brockovich, she also memorized phone numbers of possible sources and gave them to reporters to follow up.

A few days before her death, Esperat had gotten in touch with Davao-based journalist Carolyn Arguillas to provide her with information on "the sale of audit certificates" in Cotabato, but the meeting never took place.

It was typical of her to poke her nose wherever she suspected wrongdoing was taking place.

'I grew up on bullets'

After leaving the DA last year, Esperat made a living by selling Tupperware and running a small *sari-sari* store in Tacurong.

She also wrote a weekly column for a local newspaper titled "Madam Witness."

Her friends and family repeatedly cautioned her and asked her to slow down.

But she said once, "I am not exactly new to this. I grew up on bullets. My father was a farmer who became the first chief of police of our town. After that he was a municipal councilor. There were threats on his life. He survived two assassination plots, but two of my uncles were not as lucky. They were felled by assassins' bullets."

Like her uncles and so many others before her, Esperat was gunned down because she lived in a violent place where all it takes is a bullet to silence those who seek justice and to end even the most tireless crusade. *With reports from Luige A. del Puerto, Norman Bordadora and TJ Burgonio*

RP's biggest 'calamay' gone in 10 minutes

From page A1

lished what organizers had touted as the biggest glutinous rice cake ever produced in the country.

The *calamay*, which was produced by 80 people laboring over 40 huge vats, had a diameter of eight meters and reportedly cost P100,000. As much as 269 kilograms of ground glutinous rice, 1,440 coconuts and 720 kg of white and brown sugar went into its making.

It broke the previous record, established in 2003 and held also by Candon. That one was made with 184 kg of rice, 480 kg of sugar and 1,000 coconuts.

Mayor Allen Singson said the feat was Candon's way of officially claiming the tag of "*calamay* capital" of the Philippines against contenders like Alburquerque in Bohol and Malabon City in Metro Manila (which is famous for its corn-based version, *calamay de mais*).

ILOCOS Sur Rep. Eric Singson (left), his wife Grace and son, Candon City Mayor Allen Singson, share the giant glutinous rice cake locally called "calamay" during the city's celebration of the Tobacco Festival. LEONCIO G. BALBIN JR./PDI NORTHERN LUZON BUREAU

"This was not only intended as a crowd-drawer but was also our way of establishing our identity," he said.

This year's organizers separated the giant rice cake spread out under a gazebo in the city plaza into white and brown portions. But they did not slice it into bite-size pieces.

After Singson and his father, Ilocos Sur Rep. Eric Singson, had a taste, a virtual stampede broke loose.

Those in attendance scrambled to get a piece, literally clawing at the *calamay* from the edge of its plywood serving dish.

Some scooped up the gooey stuff with their hands; others clambered up and managed to get to the center of the serving base on their knees.

It was gone in 10 minutes.

But the city has set up a 24-hour *calamay* store at the plaza for both tourists and residents. The rice cake is packaged in coconut shells wrapped in dried banana stalks or in patties wrapped individually.

Tobacco festival

The presentation of the giant *calamay* opened Candon's week-long Tobacco Festival.

On Friday, a street-dancing exhibition will feature the "*tabako* masks" made by Baguio-based artist Edgardo Espiritu.

The parade will be highlighted by a papier-maché rendition of the mythical *kapre* (an ogre-like creature) smoking huge rolled tobacco leaves.

The production of Virginia tobacco is a multibillion-peso industry in Ilocos Sur. *Frank Cimatu and Leoncio Balbin Jr., PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

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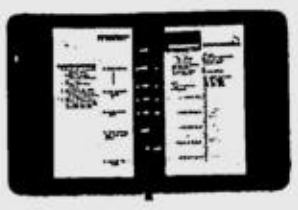

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Hottest day of year sears Metro; more steamy days ahead

From page A1

temperature hovered around 33 degrees Celsius, according to Pagasa.

Cruz advised parents to increase their children's intake of water to avoid heat-related illnesses. He said people should also prepare for the inconveniences of the summer heat.

"Because of the El Niño, we will be experiencing a warmer summer season," he said.

Cruz threw out a few words of consolation.

He said it was not likely that this summer would be able to break the hottest temperature ever recorded in Metro Manila—which was 38.5 degrees Celsius on May 14, 1987.

The hottest day in the Philippines occurred on May 11, 1969, in Tuguegarao City in Cagayan when 42.2 degrees Celsius of summer heat scorched communities and crops.

Who ordered killings in Tarlac, bishop asks

From page A1

ciano Aniceto of the Ecclesiastical Province of San Fernando, Pampanga, warned that the dispute between striking workers and the management of Luisita was now developing into a "social conflagration."

"The tense situation is reminiscent of the late 1940s when Central Luzon turned into a boiling cauldron of violence as thousands of peasants armed themselves in the face of the unchecked violations of human rights perpetrated by local landlords and the military," Aniceto said.

The archbishop's stance belies the earlier reported statement of Tarlac Rep. Benigno "Noynoy" Aquino III, a scion of the Cojuangco-Aquino clan that owns the vast sugar estate, that the bishops trying to mediate the labor dispute had abandoned their efforts supposedly because of the intransigence of the strike leaders.

While commending official findings that blamed the violent dispersal of the striking workers last November on the police, Aniceto said this should "only be the first stage of a sustained process of investigation whose final goal is to find out who ordered these killings and to bring them to justice.

"For justice to be rendered to the victims, there must first be a firm resolve to arrive at the truth—the truth of who masterminded these killings," he said.

Aniceto was referring to the killing of Tarlac City Councilor Abelardo Ladera on March 3, of Fr. William Tadena of the Philippine Independent Church on March 13, and of Anakpawis coordinator Victor Concepcion four days later.

Ladera, Tadena and Concepcion were supporters of the striking workers at Luisita.

Aniceto is part of a team from the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines invited to mediate by the Central Azucarera de Tarlac Labor Union and Sugar Mill Workers Union, and the sugar company management.

RELATIVES of slain Aglipayan priest Fr. William Tadena light candles during his wake in Barangay Matindig, Pura, Tarlac. TOOTS SOBERANO/PDI NORTHERN LUZON BUREAU

The CBCP is set to release today an update on the stalled negotiations between labor and management.

Pastoral approach

The negotiating team has been silent on any developments, but Aniceto expressed alarm in his two-page pastoral statement.

"There is serious danger that what started as a local labor and agrarian problem is now turning into a social conflagration in our midst," he said.

Aniceto expressed optimism that a previous "formula" employed by the Church at the height of the Huk rebellion in the 1950s would work.

He cited the "pastoral approach" of then Bishop Cesar Guerrero that "united the people, both rich and poor, instead of dividing them further."

He said the attitude showed by local residents in the face of the Mt. Pinatubo eruptions in 1991 should also inspire today's contending factions in Luisita to resolve their differences.

Suspended operations

"It was love that motivated our families to share resources with the homeless, and it is this same love of neighbor with its accompanying call to forgiveness that will uncover for us the formula for solving the social crisis that is Hacienda Luisita," he said.

Central Azucarera de Tarlac announced on March 18 that operations had been formally suspended.

The union mounted the strike last November in response to the dismissal of a number of its members. It accused the management of union-busting.

But the management said the union had been sabotaging operations at the sugar mill and barricading the gates in order to deny entry to other workers.

Seven workers were killed and 36 others were wounded in the violent dispersal by police on Nov. 16.

The National Bureau of Investigation has since recommended that nine policemen be charged with multiple homicide, frustrated and attempted homicide, and physical injuries in connection with the dispersal.

Vicious cycle

Archbishop Aniceto admitted that the Church could offer neither concrete solutions nor technical competence in the conflict.

"Her God-given mandate is to teach and promote those moral values that help define the purpose of man and woman's economic enterprises, like haciendas," he said, adding:

"The Church judges hacienda economic policies by what they do for and to people. Something is seriously wrong in any system where large numbers of workers are caught in a vicious cycle of heavy debts and who are denied the possibility of owning land."

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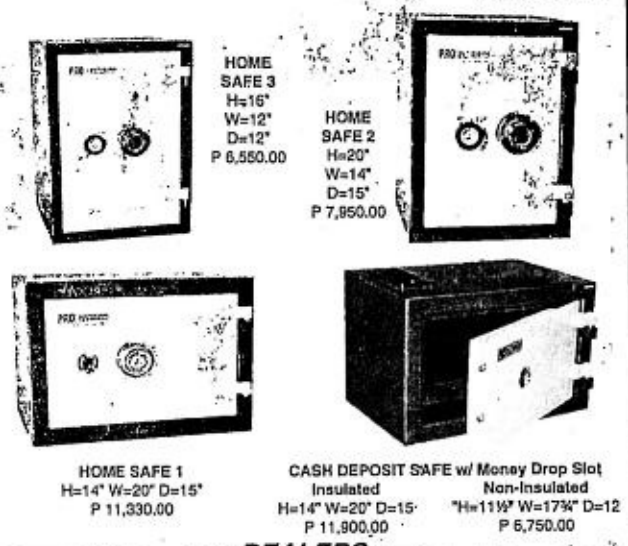

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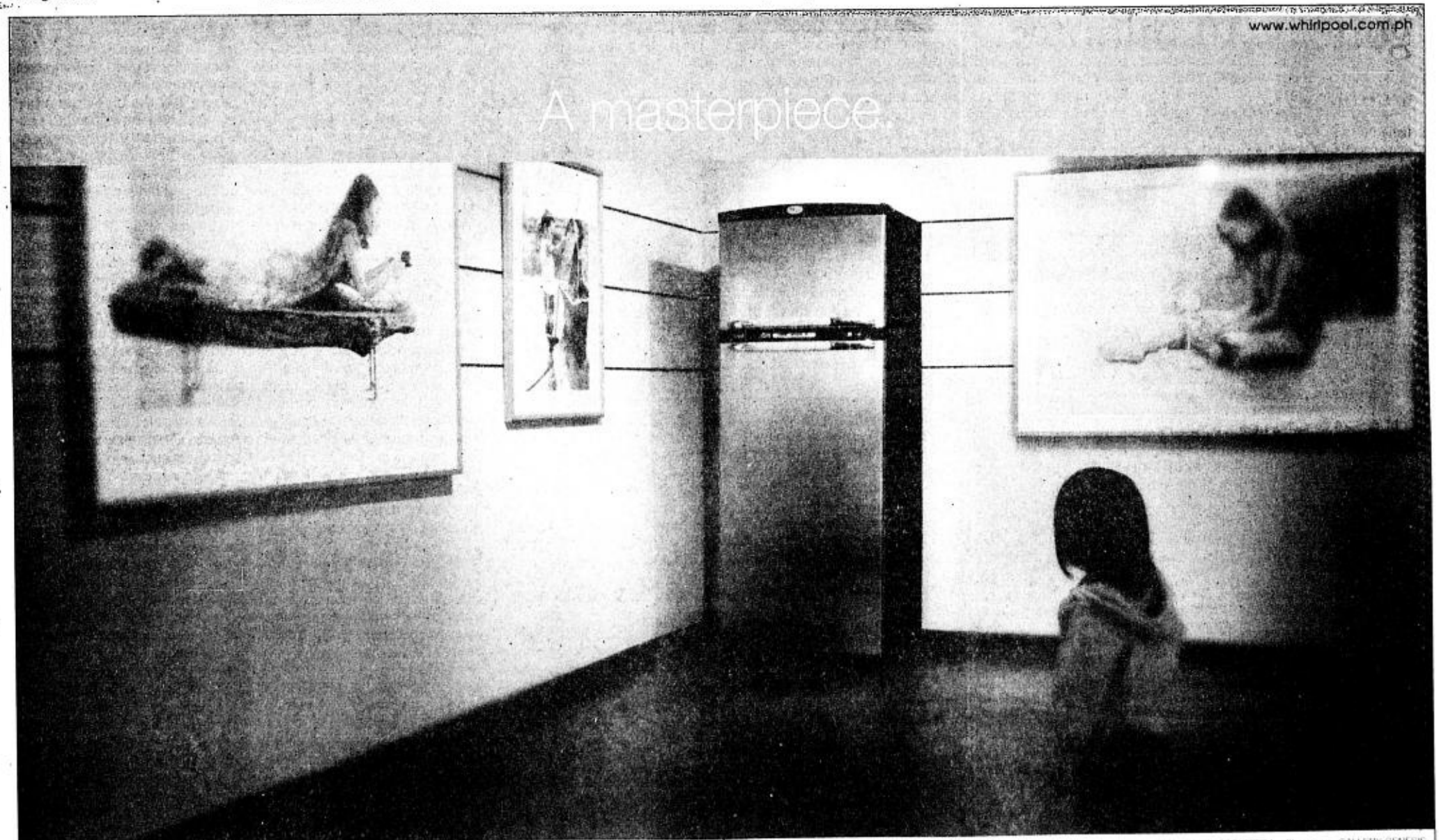

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Palace: VAT bill will pass

From page A1

generate significant amounts of revenue similar to what government is expecting," he said.

Recto had said in his sponsorship speech that the Senate version could raise as much as P81.8 billion without raising the VAT rate.

"Many of the senators think that we should not increase the rate. [They are] almost unanimous," he said.

Nothing new

Senate President Franklin Drilon said the position of the UP economics professors was nothing new.

But Drilon said he was confident the professors' position would "weigh significantly" on the senators.

"At the end of the day, when all the debates are done, I am certain the senators will uphold reason and decide on the VAT bill based on what they believe is in the best interest of the nation," he said.

In the House of Representatives, Speaker Jose de Venecia said he agreed with the UP professors that the VAT increase and expansion were "absolutely necessary for national survival."

"The continuing economic deadlock creates economic paralysis and is disastrous to Philippine democracy," De Venecia said in a statement.

"The alternative to the non-approval of the expanded VAT is continuing economic deterioration leading to debt default and financial collapse," he added.

Roxas, chair of the Senate trade committee, said he agreed with the view that a credible revenue measure must be passed.

"I think what the UP 11 are saying is that the closing off of exemptions is not enough. That remains to be seen. I am for passing a credible revenue measure so that we do not have to impose other taxes [on the people]," Roxas said.

He said a credible VAT bill did not necessarily mean raising the rate.

"What is important is how much we can generate from the revenue measure. The estimates are stable and recurring and the total [revenue] will be collected. Those are the three elements which in my view determine credibility," Roxas said.

Snub

For his part, Sen. Joker Arroyo twitted the UP economists over their decision to snub the Senate hearings on the VAT bill and later issue a position paper on it.

"Why do the UP 11 present their views on VAT to media rather than to Congress?" he said.

The professors were all invited to "express their views" at the nine hearings of the Senate committee on ways and means, but only one showed up, Arroyo lamented.

"Those who were invited as resource persons assiduously attended and responded intellectually to questions. On the other hand, the 11 UP economics professors sent Prof. Emmanuel de Dios to one session and he gave a brief perfunctory testimony which precluded interpellation," he said.

Prof. Felipe Medalla, for his part, met in private with Recto, according to Arroyo.

"A tax bill is always unpopular because of competing interests. Therefore, all sides must be heard. That is why committee hearings are indispensable," he said.

"In all of these, where were the UP 11? No one can gainsay their views because they come from economic dons, learned in the field. But they stayed away from the committee hearings where they could have articulated their views and contributed to crafting the bill," Arroyo said.

Testing validity

He noted that Malacañang had asked for four caucuses to enable the Department of Energy to explain to the Senate the importance of not imposing the VAT on independent power producers and generating companies.

"What do the UP 11 do? Issue a press release on Good Friday," he said. "Don't they want their thesis tested? Or they feel that is beneath them and the Senate unworthy of their testimony?"

Arroyo said the committee on ways and means could not just accept the UP 11's paper at face value, saying that in a parliamentary system, a position could not be accepted without testing the validity of the arguments and data.

"The committee cannot test some and not test others. That is simple fair play. We cannot have one rule for the UP 11 and one rule for all others. Hearings are conducted not to indulge in error but to discover truth," he said.

The senator said the Senate would welcome the professors' views on why they preferred raising the VAT rate from 10 percent to 12 percent.

"But the Senate cannot get their views. They give it to media so questions cannot be asked," he said.

Arroyo also wondered why the UP professors appeared to have changed their earlier position to lift all VAT exemptions.

Medalla "wanted a single VAT rate but increased from 10 percent to 12 percent," and was in favor of lifting all exemptions, Arroyo said, quoting Recto, who met with the UP professor.

"The UP 11 appear to have changed their tune on VAT exemptions like, for instance, on electricity and fuel," he said.

Appease creditors

The militant Bagong Alyansang Makabayan said the higher VAT rate called for by the economics professors was aimed at generating more revenues to appease the country's foreign creditors.

"It has become increasingly clear that the VAT hike is a mechanism for squeezing more revenues from the people to satisfy the demands of foreign creditors," said Bayan secretary general Renato Reyes Jr.

To the Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas (KMP), the UP professors are "apologists" of Malacañang.

Danilo "Ka Daning" Ramos, secretary general of the KMP, said it was a shame that the university, an institution known to protect the interest of the poor, had a UP 11 with an orientation detrimental to the poor.

Cause of delay

Recto said the special session may not be enough to pass the VAT bill because of the sticky issue of whether the power sector should be exempted.

"Frankly speaking, the biggest problem is just basically power. It appears that there are no problems in many of the other provisions," he said.

Recto said the government's changing data on the revenue that would be generated by subjecting the P300-billion power industry to the VAT was delaying the approval of the measure.

The government appears to be deliberately changing its estimates—from P30 billion down to P1.7 billion—to justify the power sector's continued exemption from the VAT, according to Recto.

With reports from Philip C. Tubeza, Norman Bordadora, Blanche S. Rivera and TJ Burgonio in Manila; and Delfin T. Mallari Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

How NPA guerrillas lost China's support

From page A1

battle cry, "This Nation Shall Be Great Again," began adopting repressive measures against the mounting opposition in a bid to entrench himself in power. When the NPA fired the first shot of the revolution to challenge the growing dictatorship, China lost no time in throwing its support behind the Maoist rebels.

As a further sign of his sympathy for the insurgency, Mao approved the coming of the CPP mission in a letter to Sison relayed through Kang Sheng, the most powerful member of the Chinese Communist Party's politburo. "People of the World Unite and Defeat US Imperialism and Its Running Dogs!" was the ideological mantra being beamed from China at the time.

Days after our three-man delegation arrived in Beijing, we were officially welcomed by the CPP politburo that hailed our mission as one of the Filipino people's "first steps in their Long March to national freedom and democracy." The official who represented Mao was Geng Biao, the minister for the agency in charge of China's relations with global revolutionary movements. Geng was congenial, but after the customary exchange of pleasantries, he quickly turned solemn.

Zhou's concerns

Premier Zhou Enlai, according to Geng, wanted to relay his concerns about our mission. Zhou, the voice of tact and moderation in Chinese politics and diplomacy, had stressed that "revolutionaries should stay in their own country" and practice self-reliance. It was Zhou's subtle way of saying he disagreed with Mao's doctrine of giving China's unconditional support to revolutions wherever they occurred. Zhou was in fact conveying the message that the Filipinos shouldn't have come seeking military supplies from them; and more important, revolutionaries should fight their battles alone but with China's moral support.

Geng, a Long March veteran who later became defense minister, also disclosed that the premier had reservations about bringing our children with us to Beijing. Aside from my two daughters and the son of mission leader Ibarra Tubianosa, Sison's three children had tagged along with our group. Joma wanted his two daughters and son to be out of harm's way, after his brother Francisco and his wife's brother-in-law, Carlos del Rosario, disappeared without a trace in early January 1971.

At the same time, Zhou was concerned that our passage through the clandestine Macao border would offend the Portuguese authorities who had been extremely cooperative in cementing close ties with China. Previous Sison emissaries had "indiscriminately" used the Macao route, the premier noted. We were also reminded not to involve the Chinese-Filipino community "too much" in revolutionary activities.

That meeting afforded us our first glimpse of the contentious issues roiling Chinese politics.

US-China relations began to mend in 1971 when American ping-pong players pitted skills with their Chinese counterparts in Beijing. In the spring of 1972, US President Richard Nixon received an invitation to visit China to put an end to a Sino-American relationship that had remained buried in permafrost since the Cold War began. Hundreds of journalists from all over the world would cover the historic event, but none from the Philippines.

The idea lit a bulb in my mind: Why not wangle an invitation for a Filipino journalist to cover the Nixon visit? I had in mind Antonio Zumel (Ka Kaypee, for *"katawang pang-romansa"*), who had just warmed his seat as news editor of the Manila Daily Bulletin. Ibarra and I raised the matter with Gen. Ren Yungzhong, Geng's deputy. Not only did Ren agree. His government, he said, would shoulder Zumel's expenses in China on account of his progressive leanings. Thus was Philippine journalism represented in the history-making visit.

Arms shipments

In 1974, two years after the MV Karagatan failed to deliver the Chinese armaments it carried to an NPA enclave in Isabela, our mission suffered another setback. Our next vessel, the MV Andrea, was on its way to the Sanya Naval Base to load hundreds of automatic rifles in sealed plastic tubes, when it was shipwrecked in the South China Sea.

The same year, the movement experienced a series of reverses, including the capture of several ranking leaders. Sison sent an SOS to China for cash assistance, as the inflow of financial donations was being disrupted by the revolution's bad hair days.

Geng quickly responded by approving the amount of $75,000. A courier arrived in Beijing using a passport bought from a counterfeit ring in Manila. Ibarra and I inserted the dollar bills, in crisp hundred-dollar denomination, in the bottom lining of a portable typewriter. Days after the courier left carrying the typewriter, we were informed through our emergency communication line that Sison had received the greenbacks safely.

The second tranche of financial aid, however, suffered a different fate. As no courier was available at the time, Sison activated Delia San Juan, a member of the anti-Marcos coalition in America, to pick up the money, also in the amount of $75,000, at the Chinese Embassy in Ottawa, Canada. With her US passport, it was thought Delia could enter the Philippines without a hitch.

Delia, the wife of activist-professor Epifanio San Juan Jr., traveled to the Chinese Embassy whose cultural attaché handed her several wads of dollar bills. Unbeknownst to her, her trip was being shadowed by the Canadian Royal Mounted Police working in tandem with the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

At the Niagara Falls border, an FBI team detained Delia and seized the funds hidden in her suitcase. She was charged with failing to declare the money as required by law.

So desperate

Upon learning of the incident, Geng sniffed that Sison had become so desperate as to choose an inexperienced courier that exposed China's funding of the Philippine armed struggle. For not only had the Americans taken the donated money, they confiscated letters from the Beijing-based mission addressed to Sison harshly criticizing him for a leadership crisis in the movement.

Having taken over as head of the mission, following Tubianosa's resignation, I thought it was imprudent to hand over duplicates of the incriminating letters to Geng, who had requested them for the "diplomatic struggle" Beijing had to wage in light of the border incident. The Canadian media played up the story but for some reason, it was ignored by American editors.

This and the Karagatan-Andrea failures moved Zhou's ally, senior Vice Premier Deng Xiaoping, who had been rehabilitated from his "revisionist crimes" to remark that "the Philippine comrades are very clumsy." This disconcerting tidbit was relayed to us by one of our interpreters.

But Sison wasn't one to be easily discouraged. He proposed another arms shipment, this time to be undertaken by a Chinese merchant ship that would drop packaged weapons off the Visayan coastline. A modified version of the Andrea expedition, his proposal didn't even pass our delegation's laugh test.

The proposal was bluntly rejected by General Ren, normally an avuncular man with engaging manners. "You have not summed up your lessons," he snapped at me.

Crossroads

With Deng taking over the functions of an ailing Zhou, China had reached the crossroads of its relations with the Philippine revolution. Would it continue Mao's seamless commitment to support the rebel movement that had given it nothing but headaches, or did its interest lie in forging diplomatic ties with a friendly Marcos regime that had earlier sent Imelda Marcos to Beijing on a charm offensive?

The problem was not easily resolved when a top Chinese leader met our mission, including its staff, to express sympathy for our setbacks. Vice Chair Wang Hongwen, later to be reviled as a member of the radical Gang of Four, assured us that "your victories are our victories, your defeats are our defeats." Such an assurance was music to Sison's ears. Wang, the youngest member of Jiang Qing's clique, was being groomed to succeed the bed-ridden Mao who was struggling with advancing Parkinson's disease.

When Mao died in 1976, the Gang of Four was arrested in a power struggle that saw an obscure Hunan official named Hua Guofeng taking over as party chair. But the inept Hua, who remained a hardline Maoist at heart, was outflanked, outmaneuvered and outwitted by Deng. The pragmatic Chinese leader, who is best remembered for his creed—"It doesn't matter whether a cat is black or white, so long as it catches mice"—quickly took over from Hua. Thereafter, Deng presided over China's ground-breaking reforms, including a downgrading of ties to revolutionary movements.

Mission crumbles

With Deng, who was hardwired to Zhou's moderate vision, in control of what was once touted as the center of world revolution, the arms procurement mission began to crumble. There would be no more Chinese weapons and funds forthcoming. Sino-Philippine diplomatic relations would be enhanced, and, most hurting of all, our delegation function would be downgraded to the banal task of briefing Beijing on Philippine political news.

Still, our privileges were left untouched. We continued to live in a spacious compound west of Beijing, served by attendants, a driver and a cook. One of our neighbors was Pol Pot, a regular Beijing guest who rarely stepped out of his villa, which stank with the aroma of his favorite durian. A Hongqi (Red Flag) limousine with two rows of passenger seats was at our beck and call in case we needed to go for consultations at the Army 301 Hospital where members of the political hierarchy were treated, or to the Friendship Store, where we would bump into Barbara Bush. The wife of the US liaison office envoy George Bush loved to pedal a bicycle from their nearby residence to the store.

Four years after our mission set up camp in Beijing, we decided it was time to live in a rural setting to salve the wounds of our aborted revolutionary tasks. Suddenly, a life devoted to planting rice and corn, tending chestnut and mandarin orange trees, and irrigating vegetable crops with buckets of sewage water held on both ends of a balancing pole became an invitation to settle down in a Hunan state farm. We came, we saw, and we conquered the Chinese countryside. It was a graceful descent to a brave new world of our own choosing.

(Postscript: San Juan won her lawsuit against the US government and recovered part of the money seized by the FBI. Zumel, who became head of the National Democratic Front, died of multiple organ failure in the Dutch city of Utrecht four years ago. Wang died of cancer and Jiang committed suicide in the 1990s after their death sentences as Gang of Four members were commuted to life imprisonment. Geng, one of the aging politicians who survived the infighting in the Chinese bureaucracy, is waiting out his twilight years in the comfort of his Beijing home.)

4-day gov't workweek starts April 4

From page A1

pitals and health services, the fire bureau, those in charge of emergency and calamity work, and the Bureaus of Internal Revenue and of Customs.

Under the scheme, employees will be required to work 10 hours, Monday to Thursday, from 7:30 a.m. to 6:30 p.m.

Savings of P114 million

The government stands to generate P144 million in savings from the scheme, according to Energy Secretary Raphael Lotilla and Budget Undersecretary Mario Relampagos.

They said the savings would come from the lower costs of petroleum, lubricants, water and electricity used by the national agencies.

Trade Undersecretary Peter Anthony Abaya said the scheme could give the government a 14-percent savings in electricity use and another 18-percent savings in fuel consumption.

Lotilla said the Department of Energy was looking at putting up different energy conservation measures to "complement" the four-day workweek. These include minimizing the use of air conditioning units and elevators.

"Of course, we will encourage the use of electric fans in lieu of air conditioning units," he said.

Lotilla said daily wage earners would be protected under the scheme because they would continue to be paid "on the basis of a five-day workweek."

"So they don't lose their pay on the fifth day for as long as they are able to render a 10-hour work day for four days," he said.

Lotilla and Relampagos said employees would benefit from the scheme because the shortened workweek would allow them to save on transport, food and other incidental costs.

Make-up

Relampagos at one point noted that female employees would save on make-up costs because of a shortened workweek.

He said government agencies would be required to communicate to the public their office hours because in the past, the private sector complained that it had not been properly informed about it.

Asked whether productivity would be affected considering the longer work hours, the budget undersecretary said officials were "keeping an open mind on that because there is no empirical data yet that it will really happen."

Lotilla underscored the need for government to "take the leadership" role in conserving energy.

Labor Secretary Patricia Sto. Tomas, for her part, encouraged the private sector and local government units to adopt the four-day workweek.

"The private sector is not covered by the work scheme but employers can do this if they have the consent of their employees," Sto. Tomas told reporters.

Sideline

For her personally and as a government official, an extra day without work would be "priceless" because of more opportunities for rest, leisure, quality time with family and even "sidelines."

She said the extra two hours that a worker would spend in his or her office for four days was negligible compared with the benefit of having an additional day-off.

But the militant Confederation for Unity, Recognition and Advancement of Government Employees (Courage) said the four-day workweek was detrimental to both the workers and the public.

Courage president Ferdinand Gaite said the scheme would mean a day less for the people to avail themselves of the services of various government agencies.

Because of the longer working hours, employees, especially women, shall be exposed to unnecessary risks that come with going home late at night, he said.

Gaite said whatever would be saved from the transportation expenses on the extra day without work would also be used up because transport expenses were higher at night.

He said the government did not have to save money for energy expenses in the first place if it was bold enough to stand up to oil companies and stop the fuel price increases.

Cutting perks, pork and privileges of government officials in the various branches of government would save a bigger amount of money than the four-day workweek scheme, Gaite said. ***With a report from Abigail L. Ho***

PPI: We're no 'old boys club'

By Alcuin Papa

WE'RE NO "old boys club."

This was how Philippine Press Institute chair Amado "Jake" Macasaet reacted to fears expressed by the Manila Standard Employees Association that an "old boys club" in the PPI might protect Today newspaper publisher and Makati Rep. Teodoro "Teddyboy" Locsin Jr.—the subject of the MSEA complaint.

Last week, the 100-strong MSEA lodged a complaint with the PPI saying that Locsin's dual positions as publisher of the new Manila Standard Today and as representative of the first district of Makati violated at least three provisions of the Philippine Journalists' Code of Ethics.

In a phone interview with the INQUIRER, Macasaet said the PPI had yet to tackle the complaint filed by the MSEA against Locsin. "We don't want to be accused as being an 'old boys club.' We have not made a decision [on the issue] yet," he said.

He said the PPI board would tackle the complaint sometime on Wednesday or Thursday. "We want as many members [as possible] to discuss the complaint. I hope we can get enough board members to attend so we will have not just a simple majority," Macasaet added.

He explained that when the PPI received the complaint filed by MSEA on March 22 "it was not possible to get [the other board members] together and call a meeting during Holy Week."

The PPI is a national organization of Philippine newspapers. Its principal aim is the promotion of ethical standards and the professional development of Filipino journalists. It also seeks to protect the rights and freedoms of Filipino journalists. The organization is administered by a 15-person board of trustees.

Manila Standard Today is a broadsheet that resulted from the merger of Manila Standard (majority-owned by businessman Enrique Razon) and Today (owned by Locsin, businessmen Manuel Zamora and Antonio Cojuangco).

Macasaet reiterated that the PPI board would be fair on the matter. "Fairness is our job. It is a duty that we would perform." He added that this was the first time the PPI had received a complaint from an employees' union and that "union complaints are usually labor matters."

This did not mean that newspaper employees do not have the right to bring issues like this to the PPI, he explained.

Earlier, MSEA vice president Jing Villamente had called on the PPI to act on their complaint fearing that an 'old boys club' in the PPI would protect Locsin.

Lourdes "Chuchay" Fernandez, former editor in chief of Today and now co-managing editor of the merged broadsheet, defended Locsin from the "conflict of interest" accusation, saying he had never meddled in the "treatment" of stories when he was publisher of Today.

Who rented P1-M-a-night room in Vegas? Probe sought

WHO'S the Filipino who rented the P1-million-a-night hotel suite in a Las Vegas hotel to watch the Erik Morales-Manny Pacquiao fight two weeks ago?

House Minority Leader Francis Escudero yesterday called for a congressional investigation into a column item by INQUIRER sports columnist Recah Trinidad that a Filipino, reputedly a public figure, rented a $20,000-suite at the MGM Grand hotel.

(Based on yesterday's currency conversion rate of P54.48 to the US dollar, this is equivalent to P1,089,600.)

"This might not be illegal but it is certainly immoral," Escudero said.

He claimed the investigation would not focus on determining the identity of the public figure but only on strengthening the country's laws against ostentatious display of wealth by public officials.

"This is the source of public upheavals, when you flaunt your wealth in the face of so much suffering by our people," Escudero said.

"This was bad taste even if the (public figure's) wealth was inherited," he added.

Escudero said the investigation would not be a witch hunt but he said those who went to Las Vegas, including more than a dozen congressmen and First Gentlemen Jose Miguel Arroyo, might be invited to shed light on the matter.

He said Congress should look into whether or not the country's laws against public officials flaunting their wealth should be strengthened.

He noted that the Code of Ethical Standards for Public Officials calls on government employees to live modest lives while the Civil Code bars ostentatious display of wealth which might cause public unrest.

In his column Bare Eye on March 23, Trinidad said that a Filipino who came to watch the Morales-Pacquiao match rented the $20,000-a-night MGM Grand Villa 1, which has a total floor area of 12,000 square feet.

The suite had its own swimming pool, a front garden, and other amenities.

Trinidad said that the Filipino was not a congressman but was a "heavyweight backer" of Pacquiao. He declined to name the person at the request of his source adding that baring it "would be a political bombshell." *Philip C. Tubeza*

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NOTICE OF REGULAR ANNUAL STOCKHOLDERS' MEETING

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the regular annual stockholders' meeting of **GLOBE TELECOM, INC.** will be held at the Grand Ballroom, Hotel InterContinental Manila, Ayala Center, Makati City on **MONDAY 04 APRIL 2005** at **9:00 A.M.** with the following

AGENDA

1. Determination of Quorum
2. Approval of Minutes of Previous Meeting
3. Annual Report of Officers
4. New Business
   - 4.1 Ratification of all Acts and Resolutions of the Board of Directors and Management adopted in the ordinary course of business during the preceding year.
   - 4.2 Ratification of the Resolution of the Board of Directors adopted on 01 February 2005 reducing the authorized capital stock to cancel Treasury Shares, and the amendment to the Article Seventh of the Amended Articles of Incorporation to reflect the same.
5. Election of Directors (including the Independent Directors)
6. Election of Auditors and Fixing their Remuneration
7. Consideration of such other business as may properly come before the meeting
8. Adjournment

Stockholders of record as of **16 February 2005** shall be the stockholders entitled to vote at the meeting. As per By-Laws, the Stock and Transfer Books of the Corporation will be closed from **31 March to 04 April 2005**, inclusive.

Mandaluyong City, 02 February 2005.

FOR THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

(SGD.) RENATO O. MARZAN
Corporate Secretary

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The WORLD

Editor Luverne B. Gueco

India: Superpowers ignoring nuke bazaar

NEW DELHI—Indian Foreign Minister Natwar Singh on Monday accused the world's superpowers of turning a blind eye to nuclear commerce in South Asia, saying it was having an "adverse impact" on his country's security and on global peace.

Singh's comments come ahead of a May conference in New York called to review the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), which bans the transfer of nuclear weapons and the technology to make them.

Singh did not name rival Pakistan but made it clear that recent disclosures of proliferation from the neighboring country was one of the reasons India is staying away from the nuclear treaty.

"The infirmities of the non-proliferation order have imposed costs on India and have had adverse impact on our security, as much of the clandestine proliferation which is today the focus of attention emanates from our neighborhood," said Singh.

"The response of the international community over the years has been, from our point of view, inadequate at best or permissive at worst, leading to the present adverse situation," he told a two-day conference on "Emerging Nuclear Proliferation Challenges."

"Even today we see the same inconsistencies in approach with selective focus on the recipients of such clandestine proliferation but not enough attention on the sources of supply.

"India has an abiding interest in non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction not just for its own security but for peace and security of the world at large."

Pakistan has been caught up in a row over nuclear proliferation since February 2004, when its disgraced nuclear scientist Abdul Qadeer Khan confessed to passing atomic technology to North Korea, Libya and Iran.

Khan is under virtual house arrest but Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf pardoned him and has refused to let foreign countries or the International Atomic Energy Agency question him.

Since 1968 some 188 nations have put their names to the NPT.

Signatories include the five main nuclear powers—Britain, France, China, Russia and the United States—but not emerging nuclear states India and Pakistan or suspected nuclear state Israel.

Pakistan conducted nuclear tests in May 1998 after rival India conducted similar detonations. Both countries have active missile programs.

Pakistan and India have a bitter history of confrontation, mainly over the Muslim-majority state of Kashmir. But they have been engaged in a peace dialogue since January last year. *AFP*

General says Soviet-built missiles still combat-ready

MOSCOW—Russia's Soviet-built nuclear missiles have remained fully combat-ready, and the military isn't planning to withdraw them from service en masse, a top general was quoted as saying Monday.

The deputy chief of Russia's Strategic Missile Forces, Lt.-Gen. Vitaly Linnik, said that recent test launches of Soviet-built missiles had proven their worth.

"None of the missile systems on alert duty now has trends of degradation," Linnik said, according to the Interfax-Military News Agency.

The Russian strategic forces have conducted regular test launches of Soviet-built ballistic missiles to check their readiness. Military officials have said that Russia would keep them on duty for another 10 to 15 years—long past their designated lifetime.

"The missiles aren't going to be taken out of service in bulk," Linnik said.

The post-Soviet funding shortage has left the Russian military struggling to extend the lifetime of Soviet-built missiles, since the government lacks the funds to quickly replace them with new weapons. *AP*

BULLS FIGHT
A South Korean bull (right) fights with a Japanese bull during the 2005 Bullfighting Festival in Cheongdo, 350 km southeast of Seoul, March 13. Around 120 bulls from Japan, US, Australia and South Korea competed in the festival from March 12 to March 16. AFP

Rainier conscious but is fighting for his life

MONACO—Monaco marked Easter with special prayers for ailing Prince Rainier III, conscious but fighting for his life, as his heart, lung and kidney functions stabilized after days of decline. The palace stressed that the health prospects of Europe's longest-reigning ruler remain worrisome.

The 81-year-old monarch, who has governed the world's second-smallest independent state for more than half a century, remained on a respirator, but the announcement Sunday from the royal palace carried a note of optimism just a day after doctors issued a grave medical report.

"The cardiac, lung and kidney functions that did not stop deteriorating have stabilized," the palace said in its latest health bulletin signed by three doctors.

Rainier "is conscious but under sedation, which allows him to withstand respiratory assistance that is absolutely indispensable," a health bulletin from the palace said.

The prognosis "remains very reserved, however," the palace said—apparently one level less severe than the "extremely reserved" judgment given by doctors Saturday.

Of the near daily statements the palace has issued since the prince was moved Tuesday into an intensive care unit, Sunday's was the first to say that Rainier was conscious, fueling questions about whether he had been unconscious before. A palace spokesman said he did not know whether Rainier had lapsed in and out of consciousness. *AP*

Kyrgyz solons cede power to new assembly

BISHKEK—Kyrgyzstan's outgoing parliament agreed Monday to cede power to a new assembly in a bid to resolve a crisis left by last week's lightning revolution and the toppling of its Soviet-era regime.

"The decision was taken to defend stability and in the interest of the nation," Ishenbai Kadyrbekov, the speaker of the outgoing chamber, told reporters after the lower house made the decision in closed session.

The upper chamber of the outgoing parliament was due to meet midday Monday to decide whether it would follow suit.

The issue of which parliament would preside in Kyrgyzstan—the outgoing chamber, or new deputies elected in a hotly disputed poll two weeks ago—has been one of the top unresolved issues in the nation since last Thursday, when veteran leader Askar Akayev fled the country after opposition protesters overran the main seat of government.

The chief of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, Jan Kubis, was in Bishkek to meet with the interim leaders, including Kurmanbek Bakiyev, whom parliament named acting president ahead of new presidential elections set for June 26.

The recent parliamentary elections, which the opposition and international observers said were rigged, sparked the demonstrations that led to Akayev's ouster and some deputies had refused to cede to the new chamber sworn in the day before the old regime crumbled. *AFP*

A YOUNG Buddhist nun looks on during rites at the Shwedagon Pagoda March 28, in Rangoon, Burma. The Shwedagon is the national shrine of Burma. AP

Asean cannot ignore Burma issue—Thai PM

BANGKOK—Southeast Asia's club of nations cannot ignore the issue of democratic reform—or its absence—in Burma (also known as Myanmar), Thailand said on Monday after some members showed signs of losing patience with Rangoon's ruling generals.

"This is an issue needing to be discussed by Asean," Thai Prime Minister Thaksin Shinwatra told reporters after rifts appeared within the ranks of the 10-strong Association of South East Asian Nations over Burma's military junta.

"It is not an issue for Thailand alone. All Asean members should try to find a solution and show our collective concern to Myanmar for its adjustment," he said.

Rangoon is due to assume Asean's rotating annual chair in mid-2006, but Malaysia and Singapore in particular appear worried about being represented by a military government despised by the Europe and the United States.

Burma insists it is heading down a planned seven-step "roadmap to democracy," but with opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi still under house arrest, few Western governments believe its assurances. *Reuters*

Pisa planning construction of a second 'leaning tower'

PISA, Italy—The city of Pisa is set to get another Leaning Tower.

More than 600 years after this city's most famous monument went up, officials here have approved construction of a modern office building about 5 km southeast of the original that will simulate a tilt with a trick of lighting, Milan daily Corriere della Sera reported Sunday.

Construction of the steel building—designed by architect Dante Oscar Benini—is scheduled to begin at the end of the summer and last four years, according to the newspaper. It also will house apartments and shops and is expected to cost euro50 million (US$64.8 million).

Already, some in this Tuscan city are denouncing the project as a scandal.

"Towers of steel and glass 57 meters high serve only to deface the view," Fabio Roggiolani, a Green Party representative in the regional council told Corriere.

But the city's urban planner, Giuseppe Sardu, said the second tower will attract tourists.

"The project is an example of beauty and functionality," he told the newspaper. "The new tower and square will be a monument to visit."

Calls to Sardu and to architect Benini went unanswered early Monday, which is a holiday in Italy.

The design calls for the tower to be in a plaza that also would include two shorter buildings that recall Pisa's cathedral and the baptistry, which are next to the original Leaning Tower.

Benini said the view from the top of his tower will include the older tower that inspired it. "The two towers will look at each other and historic Pisa and the Pisa of the future will be virtually united," Benini told Corriere. *AP*

EASTER ON FIFTH AVENUE
Jocelyn Jeannot balances her Easter bonnet in front of St. Patricks Cathedral on Fifth Avenue on Easter Sunday in New York City. Hundreds of people gathered along the avenue sporting all types of Easter outfits. AFP

Blair's rescue plan for Africa branded as hypocritical

By Matthew Green

NAIROBI—A trail of looted diamonds, greased palms and suspect arms deals suggests Britain is betraying its calls for action by other rich nations to stop shady corporate dealing in Africa, activists say.

British Prime Minister Tony Blair launched a detailed plan devised by his Africa Commission this month to reverse the continent's descent into poverty, including measures to ensure foreign firms do not profit from war and corruption.

But critics say Britain has failed to meet previous commitments to clamp down on activities from bribery abroad to dubious deals in African conflict zones, casting it as laggard rather than leader in enforcing corporate responsibility.

"It's a big contradiction," said Laurence Cockcroft, chair of Transparency International's British chapter. "The government is seriously deficient in meeting the strategy and targets identified in the commission's report." Blair aims to use Britain's presidency of the Group of Eight rich nations this year to win backing for his Africa plan, which also calls for a doubling of development aid and big policy shifts on trade to open markets to Africans.

But unless Britain reins in the more unsavory activities of its businessmen in Africa, it may lack the moral authority to win meaningful backing for its plan.

"They've taken very much the usual line of protecting our companies at any cost," said Patricia Feeney, executive director of Rights and Accountability in Development, an Oxford-based advocacy group. "They've not shown any sign of really taking their own medicine."

Just before the Africa Commission launched its findings, a group of British members of parliament tabled a report on the government's "slow progress" in investigating British firms accused of profiteering from a five-year war in Democratic Republic of Congo in which millions died.

A UN panel of experts listed 18 British-based firms among 85 companies accused of helping to fuel the conflict through activities such as trading looted diamonds, or securing lucrative contracts with warlords.

The MPs' report says British investigators have been hampered by a lack of resources, saying they have so far only issued public statements on two of the cases.

One statement said allegations against diamond giant De Beers were unsubstantiated, while the other urged Avient Ltd., which supplied crew for a Congolese government Mi-24 attack helicopter, to "respect the human rights of those affected by their activities."

"The experience in Democratic Republic of Congo demonstrates that the system at present fails miserably to hold anyone to account when there has been wrongdoing," British MP Norman Lamb said in remarks sent to Reuters.

Britain came in for more criticism a week after the Africa Commission report was published for its failings in cracking down on bribery by its firms abroad—precisely what the commission recommended rich countries do.

The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) issued a report saying not a single firm or person has been prosecuted since its anti-bribery convention came into force in Britain in 2001, citing a lack of political will and resources. *Reuters*

Schiavo given what could be her last communion

PINELLAS PARK, Florida—Terri Schiavo was given what could be her last communion Sunday as protesters opposed to allowing the brain-damaged woman die challenged police and blocked entry to the Florida hospice where she is staying.

The protesters also heard Mass Sunday afternoon in front of the hospice, and a priest blessed a host that would later be delivered to Schiavo, 41.

However the woman could not receive even a tiny piece of the host because her mouth was so dry, said the Father Tadeusz Malanowski, who administered the sacrament. Instead he gave her a drop of blessed wine.

Terri Schiavo has been in what doctors call a "persistent vegetative state" for 15 years since suffering severe brain damage during a cardiac arrest in 1990. Her husband Michael Schiavo has fought for years to have her feeding tube removed, saying she would not want to be kept alive artificially and should be allowed to die.

Terri Schiavo's parents however have opposed the move, but abandoned all hope of resolving the standoff through the courts after their latest legal setback on Saturday. They asked their supporters to go home and withdrew from public view on Easter Sunday, spending the day at a store in front of the hospice they were allowed to use.

Terri's father Bob, her mother Mary, her sister Suzanne and brother Bobby entered the hospice several times throughout the day, but only when Michael Schiavo had left because they cannot be in the room at the same time.

Terri Schiavo languished without food or water following a court-ordered removal of the feeding tube that had kept her alive for the past 15 years.

After a week of extraordinary intervention by US President George W. Bush, the US Congress and a spate of rejections by state and federal courts, the family finally conceded they were out of options.

TERRI Schiavo before she suffered catastrophic brain damage. AP

"I'm not saying we wouldn't be open to any idea that comes up. But at this point, it appears that time has finally run out," said attorney David Gibbs, who represents Schiavo's parents Bob and Mary Schindler, speaking to the St. Petersburg (Florida) Times newspaper.

Michael Schiavo gave permission for Terri to receive communion, said Brother Paul O'Donnell, a spokesperson for Terri's parents.

Schiavo "is really showing signs of starvation and dehydration," O'Donnell said. The brain-damaged woman has already received communion and last rites 10 days ago when her feeding tube was removed.

According to George Felos, Michael Schiavo's attorney, Terri has between four and five more days to live.

More than 35 protesters were arrested this week attempting to deliver water to Schiavo, as a dozen persons in wheelchairs blocked entry to the hospice, shouting slogans through megaphones.

President Bush, who signed legislation last week to send the Schiavo case to federal court said he did so in support of a "culture of life," but was silent on the case as he exited Easter services at a military base on Sunday.

Florida Gov. Jeb Bush, brother of the president, seemed out of ideas about how to save Terri Schiavo.

"I cannot violate a court order I don't have powers from the United States Constitution or for that matter from the Florida Constitution that would allow me to intervene after a decision has been made," he told CNN.

"That's it." Protesters chanted "National Guard! National Guard!" and calling governor Bush a "coward" for not intervening with the state troops.

"I think Americans should rise up and charge in there and take Terri under their custody," said Zen Garcia, a 34-year-old quadriplegic from Atlanta.

Schiavo's brother Bobby Schindler, who has lobbied officials for years, also conceded.

"I'm going to concentrate now on my mom and my family," he said, thanking supporters who prayed and protested outside the hospice where Schiavo's feeding tube was removed on March 18.

The battle has raged through the state court and legislature, but escalated after the US Congress stepped in last weekend and passed an unprecedented bill, signed by Bush, allowing the case to be heard in federal court.

Since then, the family has suffered a string of court defeats including on Saturday, when a state judge rejected the family's argument that Schiavo had tried to say "I want to live" before her feeding tube was removed. *AFP*

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Asian nations must choose sustainable growth, UN says

SEOUL—Asia-Pacific economies may be expanding fast but growth will not be sustainable for much longer unless the region pays more attention to the environment, the United Nations said Monday.

Asia-Pacific environment ministers heard the wake-up call at a two-day meeting on the environment organized by the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (Escap).

"The prevailing model—'grow first and clean up later'—is not the answer," UN Secretary General Kofi Annan said in a videotaped message to the opening of the conference.

The UN chief said the region needed "a paradigm shift toward 'green growth'" where the goals of poverty reduction and environmental sustainability could and had to go together.

The region, which accounts for 40 percent of the world's territory but is home to 61 percent of the population, has struggled to grow fast in the face of rampant poverty.

Almost two-thirds of the world's poor, who live on less than a single US dollar a day, reside in Asia and the Pacific, UN statistics show.

During the 1995-2002 period, industrial production in the region grew almost 40 percent, almost double the global average increase of 23 percent.

Kim Hak-Su, UN undersecretary general and executive secretary of Escap, acknowledged the region had to grow in order to pull itself out of poverty.

But he said the region now faced "increasing pressure" on its environmental resources.

Cited by Kim as main concerns in the region were declines in fishery resources, degradation of marine and coastal resources, loss of biodiversity and forests, and land degradation.

"Deterioration of these natural resources have continued to affect human health and livelihoods and increased the vulnerability of many economies," he said in a statement.

He urged the UN meeting—joined by 350 delegates, including 42 ministers or deputy ministers, from the Asia-Pacific region—to find "a strategy to shift toward environmentally sustainable economic growth."

"'Green growth' is the biggest challenge facing the world and this dynamic region in particular," Klaus Toepfer, executive director of the UN Environment Program (Unep), told the conference.

South Korean Environment Minister Kwak Kyul-ho, host of the UN conference, said he would push for a "Seoul Initiative for Green Growth" to be adopted at the close of the meeting.

The UN conference was the first high-level international environmental conference since the Indian Ocean tsunami disaster devastated parts of the region in December.

The UN Escap said in a statement the tragedy was "another testimony of the urgent need to address the risk of common threats caused by natural hazards for sustainable development in the Asia-Pacific region."

The Dec. 26 tsunamis killed nearly 290,000 people around the Indian Ocean, according to a Unep report released last month. *AFP*

Foreign hackers 'phishing' for Chinese Internet victims

BEIJING—Chinese consumers are becoming increasingly popular targets of international Internet scammers, or "phishers," hoping to con the country's growing ranks of Web surfers out of their money.

Phishing, in which hackers combine spam e-mails with slick imposter websites to trick consumers into giving out bank account numbers, passwords and other sensitive information, has emerged as a potent global threat.

"China reported 223 fake websites last year, a huge increase from only one reported from 2002 to 2003," Xinhua news agency said on Monday.

Bank of China and Industrial Commercial Bank of China said in December they had found fake versions of their websites.

Apparently only one consumer was duped and both banks said they had taken further Internet security precautions.

Most of the fake pages had been created by foreign hackers that could manipulate Chinese host servers because they were not backed by up-to-date security software or firewalls, Xinhua said.

Nearly 100 million of China's 1.3 billion population were Internet users at the end of 2004. Debit and credit card use and electronic payments are surging in the fast-developing country, making many Chinese perfect prey for phishers.

"As e-commerce and online payment services and bank business become more popular, so do these website imitations," a center official was quoted as saying. *Reuters*

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4. Nokia 7270 Mobile Phone	Bryan G. Castillo	Blk.7, Lot 9 Del Rosario St., Fairwood Subdivision, B.P.S., Imus, Cavite	Octagon SM Bacoor
5. Olympus mju-mini Digital Camera	Elain Ingrid Manlangit	Sunnyville, Ulas, Davao City	Columbia
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EPSON PHILIPPINES is proud to announce the winners of the First Draw of Epson's "Just Got Lucky" Raffle Promo which was held last March 21, 2005 at the Katha Epson Digital Gallery in Glorietta 3, Makati City. We congratulate the winners! Second draw will be held on April 20, 2005 at the Epson Showroom, 4/F Bldg. B CyberZone Area, SM Megamall, Mandaluyong City and Third and Grand Draw will be held on May 20, 2005 at Epson Philippines Corporation Head Office, 36 Flr. Rufino Pacific Tower, Ayala Avenue Makati City.

Photo of the First Draw attended by Erwin Creencia, Product Management Associate and Alex Manahan, Marcom Senior Associate, representing Epson Philippines Corporation, with DTI representative Ms. Ma. Josefa N. Villaruel, observing the proceedings.

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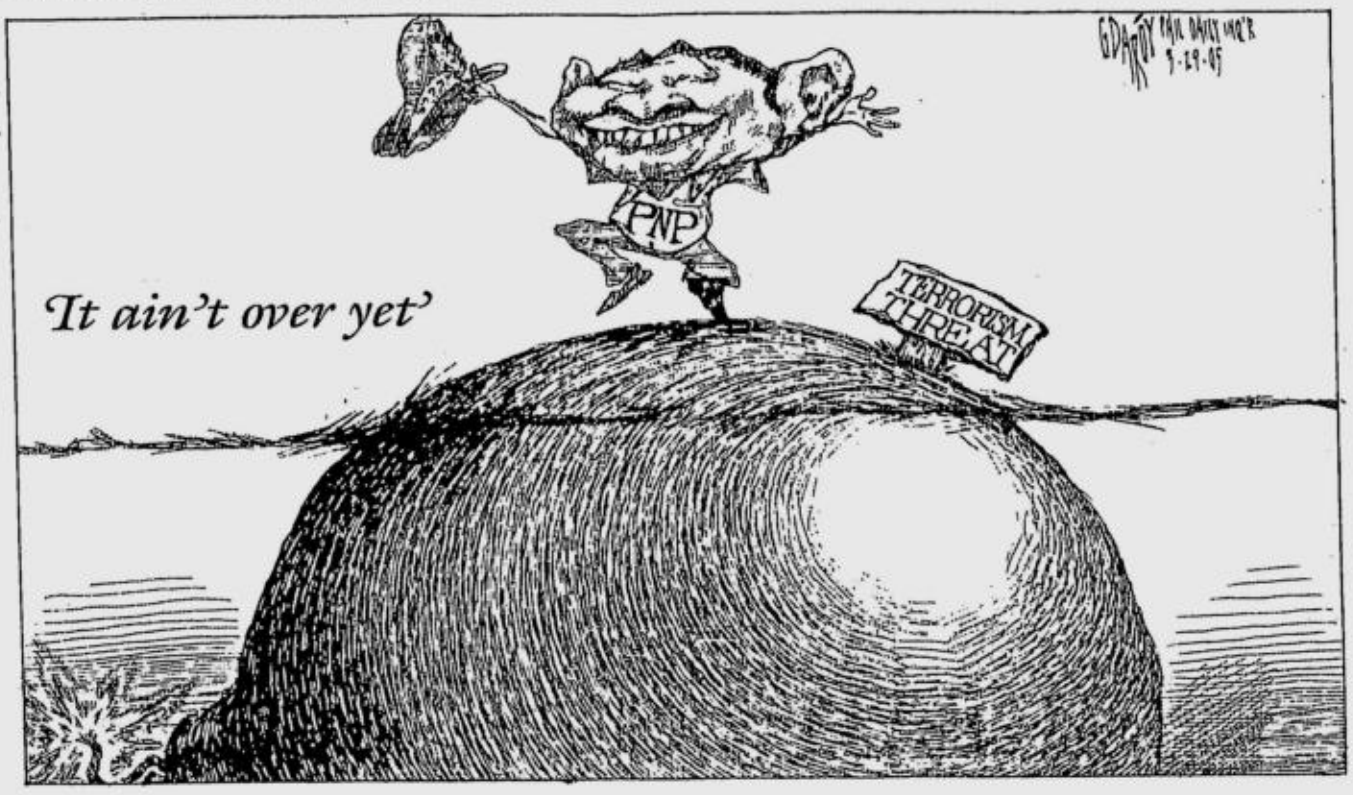

Conflict of interest

EDITORIAL

SOMETIME ago, New York Times reporter Laura Foreman was found to be romantically involved with a politician whom she was covering. After the affair was discovered, Times executive editor A.M. Rosenthal famously told Foreman, "I don't care if you sleep with elephants, as long as you don't cover the circus."

We are reminded of the story by the accusation made last week by the Manila Standard Employees Association that Makati Rep. Teodoro Locsin has a conflict of interest in that he is both a legislator and a publisher at the same time.

May a journalist be a government official at the same time? The MSEA in a complaint filed with the Philippine Press Institute said that being a publisher and a congressman at the same time, Locsin violated Article 5 of the Journalists' Code of Ethics which says that a journalist "shall not let personal motives or interests influence [him] in the performance of [his] duties; nor shall [he] accept or offer any payment, gift or other consideration of a nature which may cast doubt on [his] professional integrity." The association also said Locsin violated Article 11 which says that a journalist shall conduct himself "in such a manner as to maintain the dignity of [his] profession. When in doubt, decency should be [his] watchword." The MSEA said Locsin violated Article 10 which states that a journalist "shall accept only such tasks as are compatible with the integrity and dignity of [his] profession, invoking the 'conscience clause' when duties imposed on [him] conflict with the voice of [his] conscience."

The Code of Ethics of the Society of Professional Journalists (of the United States) says: "Secondary employment, political involvement, holding public office and service in community organizations should be avoided if it compromises the integrity of journalists and their employers. Journalists should conduct their personal lives in a manner which protects them from conflicts of interest, real or apparent. Their responsibilities to the public are paramount. This is the nature of their profession."

Article III of the Statement of Principles of the American Society of Newspaper Editors says: "Journalists must avoid impropriety and the appearance of impropriety as well as any conflict of interest or the appearance of conflict. They should neither accept anything nor pursue any activity that might compromise or seem to compromise their integrity."

The Associated Press Managing Editors Association Code of Ethics for Newspapers and their Staffs says: "The newspaper and its staff should be free of obligations to news sources and special interests. Even the appearance of obligation or conflict of interest should be avoided."

The Sydney Morning Herald Code of Ethics says: "...Those responsible for coverage of news, current issues and opinion shall not be members of a political party nor stand as a candidate in an election for public office."

The Philippine Daily Inquirer does not allow any of its staff members to serve in any capacity in the government. Columnists, for one, while they are "expected to advocate a certain point of view...may not serve as propagandists for any political party or candidate, business interest or any other entity."

Manuel Quezon III had to resign as presidential adviser on historical affairs before joining the INQUIRER as editorial writer and columnist. Previously, a reporter of the Lifestyle section was asked to resign when it was discovered that she was writing press releases for a cultural organization.

Journalists have to be mindful of conflict of interest because of the adversarial role they play vis-à-vis the government. They are supposed to be watchdogs of government. How can they perform this function if they themselves are in government? Officials are elected to govern, not to report or comment on government.

We do not know how the PPI will act on the MSEA complaint, whether it will act on it itself or refer it to the Philippine Press Council which it had created to decide on ethical issues, starting with the right of reply.

If the PPI or PPC makes a ruling on the case, we don't know if it can enforce it. What Bill Kovach and Tom Rosenstiel said in "The Elements of Journalism" may be instructive. They said: "Since there are no laws of journalism, no regulations, no licensing and no formal self-policing, and since journalism by its nature can be exploitative, a heavy burden rests on the ethics and judgment of the individual journalist and the individual organization where he or she works." Ultimately, it is the respondent in a conflict-of-interest case who will have to make the decision.

Toga pageants

VIEWPOINT

Juan L. Mercado

"DO u want 2 no d obstcls 2 educhsn?"

That's text lingo for an essay Jose Rizal wrote in Heidelberg: "Do you want to know the obstacles to education?" Rizal's question resurges yearly when freshly scrubbed youngsters march in graduation pageants.

The times are hard, Education Secretary Florencio Abad counseled. So, keep the rites "simple and austere."

Many parents and students, the papers say, furiously objected. So, why did Abad's casting of pearls spark a mindless uproar?

Togas symbolize a dream for parents who slave so their children can graduate. They regard schooling as a escape hatch they never had. Their children can wiggle through them to escape the destitution their own lack of education locked them in.

That dream is most vivid in "core-poor" families. "There were over four million more poor people in (15 years)," notes the Asian Development Bank's just-published book, "Poverty in the Philippines." There are "seven regions in which the number of urban poor families grew by more than 20 percent."

"Bahay man ipre-prenda sa educacion sa anak ninda," a Masbate proverb says. Even their life they would pawn, for their children's education.

Research buttresses that folk wisdom. "Poverty incidence falls by three percent for every one percent improvement in literacy," UP School of Economics' Arsenio Balisacan concluded in a study of regional poverty.

So, many insist on "the works": dances, diplomas, videos, etc. Elementary graduates are swathed in flowing togas, complete with stola, whistling up images of Elizabeth Taylor in "Cleopatra" or Russell Crowe in "The Gladiator."

But aren't we confusing haberdashery for learning? That'd be an "obstacle to education." More important, do those escape hatches still work?

Many diplomas today aren't worth the parchment they're embossed on, thanks to shoddy schools. "Graduates" can barely read, let alone do sums. Legions are "semi-linguals": crippled in both dialect and English.

"We hab sop drink in batols," proclaims a school canteen menu. Kids snicker in honest bewilderment at a Shakespeare movie. They're cut off from the worlds opened by Nick Joaquin, Horacio de la Costa, Thornton Wilder or Rabindranath Tagore.

A first-year high school student's reading level resembles that of a late fourth grader or early fifth grader, Education Undersecretary Juan Miguel Luz told the INQUIRER.

From 2002 to 2004, scores in the National Achievement Test (NAT) and High School Readiness Test (HSRT) didn't budge. "Every year, the figures should be moving up, but that's not the case."

To pass, students should tally 60 percent, at least, in English, science and math. But Metro Manila students turned in scores ranging from 32 to 36 percent. Students in Bicol and Region 11 (Davao) were the tail-enders.

"For the 2003 NAT, the overall national score was 50.03 percent for Grade 5," the INQUIRER reported. It was "44.3 percent for fourth-year high students." Dirt-poor Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao fared better, scoring 45 percent in the two tests.

These kids will flounder in college, Luz adds. In fact, the latest International Mathematics and Science Exams ranked the Philippines at No. 41, out of 45 countries. We were wedged between Morocco and Botswana, while Singapore topped the exams.

Togas merely mask what is a flunkers' treadmill. "So, whom are we kidding?" the UN's Philippine Human Development Report asks.

A German peasant's son, Rizal noted, would have, at least eight full years of adequate schooling. In contrast, a Filipino would "dedicate half of that time."

Our kids today get 10 years of basic schooling. We scrapped seventh grade in 1940 and never restored it. And 67 percent drop out before finishing high school due to poverty and related causes.

Countries like Canada or Germany, in contrast, provide 13, sometimes 14, years of basic education. Even poorer nations like Myanmar, Laos and Cambodia require 11 years.

Rizal furthermore criticized "schools whose results are negligible" (read: diploma mills). More than 100 years after Rizal's acerbic comment, Filipino educators bewail the "quality deficit."

The Council of Private Educational Associations earlier backed then Education Secretary Edilberto de Jesus' drive for a "bridge program." It was, they stressed, a practical way to close the gap between public and private school students.

Today, "our first two years college in the Philippines are often regarded as the equivalent of third and fourth-year high school" in other countries, Copea said then. "The freshman course in most colleges comes out as a remedial course on high school English, mathematics and science."

But the needed tough measures would ruffle a popular dream. So, President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo waffled. Nothing has come from her generalized State-of-the-Nation mumbling on barangay pre-schools.

The DepEd is mulling over , meanwhile, a UP College of Education study advocating an extra year in high school, the INQUIRER reports. It proposes universal access to additional preschool year.

Increased supplies of textbooks, with World Bank funding, are now flowing into bare schoolrooms. Additional support for teachers' training is increasing, along with private sector initiatives.

"Education makes a people...easy to govern but impossible to enslave," Lord Chancellor Brougham once said. But widespread rot in schools can't be reversed overnight.

Until political will for education reforms emerges, those massed togas will resemble, as Shakespeare's "Tempest" puts it, "insubstantial pageants from the baseless fabric of a dream."

* * *

E-mail: juan_mercado@pacific.net.ph

Right to die

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

I WAS very curious about how the more conservative sector of this country would react to "Million Dollar Baby." It has, of course, won big at the Oscars and turned Clint Eastwood into an even more bankable filmmaker, quite apart from star, in Hollywood today. The film's huge success among critics and audiences alike (it was hailed by Golden Globe as well, which is a more accurate barometer of popular taste) may have greatly influenced its reception, which was characterized by a lack of controversy.

That movie ends in euthanasia, or "mercy killing," as the term is more widely known. In the past, that would have raised the hackles of the religious community. In the movie, Hilary Swank's character, an up-and-coming prizefighter is sent to the canvas by a cheap shot by her opponent during a break. She twists her neck and ends up paralyzed all the way down. Clint Eastwood, her trainer, keeps watch over her and treats her like his long-lost daughter.

Her condition doesn't get better, it gets worse. She is reduced to a consciousness encased, or trapped, in inert flesh. In the end, she begs to be relieved of her plight and asks him to personally see her off. He recoils in horror at the request but, after a long and bitter 12 rounds with his soul, relents in the end.

Frankly, I was surprised the movie didn't see picket lines in the local movie houses where it was shown as well indeed as those in some parts of the United States. It has some pretty unsettling things to say about winning and losing and the kinds of fights we are compelled to face in life. That now has many Americans up in arms over the real-life version.

That is the case of Terri Schiavo. It's been in the news over the past week. Terri suffered brain damage in 1991 from an affliction related to eating disorder and has been kept alive artificially since then. Her husband, Michael, says she herself has begged for her plight to be ended. The Supreme Court sided with Michael and, last Thursday, ordered her feeding tube not to be reinserted. Since then her life has been ebbing. A fact that has angered her parents who demand that the tube be put back, saying their daughter's right to life, quite apart from her religious beliefs, is being violated. They insist she will get better in time, a conviction belied by her doctors.

My sympathies are entirely with Terri's husband Michael and ultimately, if Michael is telling the truth about his wife's wishes (and there is no reason to disbelieve it, he has kept by her side all these years), with Terri herself.

Let me be clear about one thing before I go on. I do think life is the most precious gift in the world and we would do well to protect it with all the jealousy we can muster. I do believe in fighting ferociously to preserve life, particularly against the ravage of fatal disease, even when everything seems hopeless. I am not saying that as an abstract proposition. I have known people who have fought cancer in particular with every ounce of strength, amid great pain and the crumbling of the flesh, amid—which matters greatly to people who are not rich—the daunting cost of medication.

A cousin-in-law, Gina Alunan, did so. She developed an ovarian cyst in the early 1980s which went into remission for a long time before returning with a vengeance some years ago. The recurrence ravaged her body swiftly. Eventually, the doctors took out much of her stomach, leaving her permanently hooked on to a dextrose bottle, which became her main source of sustenance. But she fought on, and even managed to attend family gatherings and reunions. The Christmas before she died, she had been pretty much reduced to a bag of bones. The parallel with a concentration camp victim leaped to mind.

I personally found her struggle to go on and hope that something would turn up down the road valiant, and I remain as much in awe of it now as then. But even at her most wretched, Gina was never reduced to a vegetative state. Her mind remained sharp to the end, and she could still move, albeit while being wheeled on a wheelchair.

Terri Schiavo is another case entirely. If you saw her face on TV, you would know the full meaning of the word vegetative, particularly without the makeup Swank got in "Million Dollar Baby," which still made her look respectable. Reality is far more heart-rending.

The right to life carries with it one fundamental condition, and that is the right to dignity. Those two concepts are so allied they are completely indistinguishable. The right to life is the right to dignity. No one may rob another person of his or her life, but no one may rob another person of his or her dignity either. The first is not worse than the second, the second is worse than the first. The greatest pain is not the one caused by a malignant cell, even if it attacks the marrow of the bone. It is the one caused by absolute humiliation, particularly the one that pierces the marrow of the soul. And you cannot be more humiliated, or deprived of life, than to be reduced to the state Terri Schiavo is in.

I do not know that Terri's parents, or those who are rallying outside the gates of her hospital or the Supreme Court, are doing her a favor by insisting on her "right to live." I cannot imagine that we can attach so many different meanings to the word "life" that we cannot commonly understand it in terms of what it means to live. Keeping Terri alive in her state against her own wishes does not affirm life, it defeats it. It is a personal choice in any case, and she has chosen.

There are no winners here, there are only grief and relief in equal measure. Those were what I felt after watching "Million Dollar Baby." Those are what I'll feel when Terri Schiavo rejoins her Maker.

Finding the balance

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan

AS my contribution to the observance of Lent and Easter, I presented with some editing Chapter 6 of the book "Backpack of a Jesus-Seeker," by Fr. Carlos H. Abesamis of the Loyola School of Theology. "Backpack" features imaginary conversations between three characters who discuss various faith aspects in a style akin to "animation in print." Using Mel Gibson's "The Passion of the Christ" as a jump-off for discussing the meaning of Jesus' death, they looked into the film's impact on Filipino Catholicism; then they dissected the questions of "Why Jesus died?" and "Why He was killed?" Here's the last installment:

Why was He killed?

Carl: The death of Jesus is without doubt one of the most meaningful deaths—if not the most meaningful—in history. The stakes He played for the sake of human life, the poor, justice would have conferred enough meaning to his death.

Seeker: However, another, more mystical meaning, was given to His death…

Backpack: It was understood to be a sacrificial offering in atonement for the sins of the world.

Cultural background

Carl: The view that someone's death could have an atoning value was not strange in a Jewish cultural environment.

Backpack: In the Jewish religious system, sacrificial blood, usually of animals was the vehicle for sin-atonement.

Carl: Thirdly, Isaiah 53 spoke of a servant-figure, originally referring to the people Israel, that suffers for the transgressions of others.

Who gave this meaning to Jesus' death?

Carl: The insight into the sacrificial meaning of Jesus' death was discerned by the early Christians who understood it in the light of the Suffering Servant of Isaiah (52:13-53:12).

Seeker: It's not unlikely, however, that it originated with Jesus Himself at a time when mortal opposition was closing in on Him (Mk 10:45, 14:24).

Two aspects of Jesus' death

Backpack: There should then be at least two ways of talking about Jesus' death: 1) Why did He die? Answer: to atone for sin. 2) Why was He killed? What earned him enemies who finally killed him?

Seeker: Correct. We would do well to take both aspects seriously and not let the faith-meaning cancel out the historical aspect. Otherwise we unwittingly make a blood-thirsty sadist of God who sends His Son to die without a human historical process.

* * *

Carl: There indeed are biblical texts which say, without further qualification, that God sent Jesus to die for our sins.

Backpack: One such text is "God…sent his Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins" (1 Jn 4:10).

Seeker: But another way of looking at it from inside history is that He first stakes His life for the Kingdom and its justice. He makes enemies; they kill him; His death is offered in atonement for sin.

Recover the aspect: "Why was He killed?"

Backpack: In a general way the clergy and laity, together with Gibson, often focus only on "Why did He die?" The question, "Why was He killed?" is nearly overlooked. But it's important for you to recover it…

Carl: Because it belongs to the total story, and without it, Jesus' death cannot be explained.

Seeker: …because it is particularly meaningful in the Third World today, where modern martyrs have witnessed to values and "issues" similar to those of our first martyr. One can recall the martyred Archbishop Romero of El Salvador, while Mother Teresa of Calcutta was an imitator of this Jesus in our time. Jesus offers His followers a profile for inspiration and imitation: in His commitment to human life, the human being, and human rights above law and tradition (Mk 3:1-6)…

Backpack: …in His choice of justice-compassion-loyalty as the heart of religion (Mt 23:23); in His critique of the establishment, theology, canon law, lifestyle and practice of His own "Church" and temple-state…

Carl: …in His clear stance regarding the poor and outcasts and His equally clear stance regarding the wealthy and powerful elite.

Yes to the Open Side…But More

Seeker: The atoning death of Jesus is a sure constituent of our faith.

Carl: The sacrificial death of Jesus is a precious possession, especially to those for whom it's not just a doctrine to be believed, but an open side from whose juices we slake our thirst.

Seeker: That open side is also the living spring which flows into the Church's sacraments. But we must say more…

* * *

Carl: In the life-history of Jesus, He did not set out on a mission to die, as sometimes He is made out to be.

Seeker: Rather, He set out first "to proclaim the Kingdom and its justice."

Carl: It was this proclamation in word and action which then drew Jesus into mortal conflict with the social, economic, political and religious elite of his time, and brought him to his cross.

Backpack: His death was then given a particular meaning—an atoning death for sin.

Carl: Thus today, although it's true that in our liturgy we read about Jesus' ministry in the gospels, too many of us subconsciously and inaccurately treat Jesus' pre-crucifixion life as merely a preparation to his atoning death for human sin.

Find a balance

Backpack: We have to find a balance. We have to recover the life-story of one who "died, was executed, for the Kingdom and its justice."

Seeker: A story which calls into question our own life-story. Is mine where a death-bed at the end of the road is taken for granted?

Backpack: Or is it the story of being comfortable with the way things are.

Carl: Thank you for listening, dear Reader. I hope this article serves not so much as a critique of Gibson's film…

Seeker: as an appreciation of the Jesus we celebrate in Lent and Easter.

Carl: Who, after three days, walks out on death and into our tiny hearts and every nook and cranny of the universe.

'Times 54'

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

ONE of the keys to surviving in the United States, we're told, is to stop multiplying prices by 54—or whatever is the current peso-dollar exchange rate. How can you enjoy a movie, for instance, knowing a single ticket costs $6, or more than P300? Especially if the movie is a silly piece of froth like "The Pacifier?"

The secret to enjoying a visit to the US, then, is to "live" in the moment and the place, imagining one has the dollar paycheck to match the dollar prices. Thoughts of the peso value of the items you consume, purchase and enjoy will only keep you sulking in your host's home, vegging out before the TV set and wallowing in homesickness.

But the exchange rate works in other ways, too.

The hubby and I met up in New York but we spent much of the visit apart. He stayed a week in Halifax, Virginia, in a remote rural town about an hour from the border with North Carolina, where his sister Nene and her husband Dr. Dante Bruno live. I, on the other hand, stayed with my sister Chona and her husband Willie Cruz in Fairfax Station, about four hours' drive from Halifax, mainly to keep vigil over our brother Manny who was undergoing a gastrectomy after having been diagnosed with stomach cancer.

The visit had been, I had joked, a "mission of commiseration," though there is nothing funny about the need for us to be in the US at the time we were there. I had planned to pass by Virginia after my duties in New York so I could visit with my brother, who had undergone a heart bypass last November. But what I had envisioned to be a brief social call turned into urgent business a few days after I landed in New York when Chona called to tell me of the cancer diagnosis.

My husband Pie, on the other hand, took the opportunity to join me on the trip, mainly so he could be with his sister who had been diagnosed with pancreatic cancer just this January.

* * *

THOUGH we had rather somber reasons to come a-visiting, both Pie and I realized how fortunate we still were to be with our loved ones at this trying time in their lives.

We could see with our own eyes how they were doing, could talk with doctors and other health care providers, share stories, even jokes, and just spend time with them.

If we were back home, getting updates by e-mail and phone, our anxiety levels would have risen 54 times, not knowing if we were getting the full picture, if crucial details were being kept from us, or if relatives were soft-pedaling the gravity of the situation. Alternatively, being a thousand miles away, we could also have viewed events from a remove, the realities of cancer and the fight against it dulled by distance.

And so we felt for family members back home, who relied only on our e-mail updates and phone calls for summaries, fully knowing that if we grappled with heavy issues, their worries were "times 54," exacerbated by the fog of ignorance, though certainly not of indifference.

* * *

PART of our concerns, too, was whether Manny or Nene would get all the moral support they needed, the mental and emotional resources they would have to count on if they were to survive the battles they were waging. Living away from family and the homeland, would they come unmoored and need to negotiate the roiling waters by themselves?

Fortunately, we have found that life comes up "times 54" with resources when you need it. Aside from his wife Angie, daughter Michelle and her family, especially her daughter Kiona, and of course Chona and her family, we discovered that Manny had built a wide and spread-out network to call on in times of need. Our cousins the Gavinos, most of whom live in Virginia, are regular sources of support, friendship and most important, humor. Our cousin Dr. Butch Braganza and his wife Rose, who live in New Jersey, drove all the way to Fairfax Station to visit Manny in the hospital, and would call practically everyday for updates. This, despite facing health challenges of their own.

Manny's friends proved their mettle. His friends in the Legion of Mary sent e-mail petitions and organized a prayer brigade, dubbed "1,000 Hail Marys for Manny," meeting every Friday to pray for his recovery. Priests in the area came by to pray over my brother and offer words of comfort. His co-workers at the Latvian Embassy called and visited often, assuring him he had nothing to worry about at work. Even his in-laws, the Andreses, came through, the nurses among Angie's sisters proving valuable advocates when it came to dealing with health professionals.

* * *

IN Halifax, Nene bravely smiled through our weekend "invasion," proclaiming that her cancer had become a "blessing in disguise," as it brought to her side not just her brother whom she had not seen since our last visit in 1997, but also her son Danny, who had been based in Los Angeles before he decided to re-locate to be nearer his mother.

Her brother Manny and his wife Yoly, based in Florida, uprooted themselves as well to look after Nene and to take over her work managing the family-owned clinic for as long as they were needed. Their eldest sister Dolly and her husband Himer drive over from Long Island as often as they can.

And as Pie attested, Nene, too had built a community of friends in their area. Everywhere they went, he said, at the Wal-Mart, in local restaurants and even at the Duke University hospital where she went for her chemo, people would inquire about her health, promising to pray for her recovery.

The thought of all these people pulling for our loved ones made us feel just a little bit better about having to leave them again. Easter Sunday, we hosted my family for an entire day's get-together, sharing news both happy and somber, and multiplying in the presence of family, our hopes, "times 54."

Old Batangas

SENSE AND SENSIBILITY

Bambi L. Harper

BATANGAS was an ancient name and signified a place of embarkation. After the last great eruption, its first governor was D. Ramon de Orendain, a court clerk of the Royal Audiencia. Others were D. Jose Pantoja, D. Pedro Sevilla, Gongora, Cuevas, Cabrera, D. Cosme Urquijo from Biscay and D. Pedro Gastambide.

Pedro de Castro claimed he had old documents referring to Filipino royalty in his book "Defenzorio de los Indios Filipinos" with 14 engravings of their clothes and their countenance. The prominent families when the Spaniards arrived were primarily the Mandigmas, the Casalaos, the Tangpos Manalo and others that could be found on the list of the *gobernadorcillos* of Batangas. Each of them ruled as *caciques* and kinglets in his particular area that covered three or four leagues. They were rich in gold, slaves, farm produce, game and fish. With the coming of the Spaniards, they lost them all.

Lipa was once situated very near the volcano, until 1754 when the people lost their beautiful houses of wood, their jewelry and, worse, the town's papers and archives. Despite that, De Castro was able to find an old testament written in very legible Tagalog characters. After the eruption, the people saved what they could and transferred two hours away by horseback from the volcano.

Tanauan and Sala were two ancient towns on the left banks of Laguna de Bongbong very near the volcano, but later after the eruption, they united and transferred to the present site on the banks of a beautiful river. They had their church of stone and tile dedicated to St. John Evangelist and many houses of wood. The people planted rice, wheat, mongo, corn and many other grains.

In that territory years before, De Castro had met the Ansaldo family. He dined at their house which was large, strong and beautiful. Their tableware was all of silver. They had 20 pairs of carabaos and produced large harvests of rice, wheat, corn, mongo, garlic, onions, beans, sesame, tobacco, game. They had hunting dogs and caught many wild boars and *labuyo* (wild fighting cocks). When the British arrived, they sacked the hacienda and reputedly took the daughters to London or Madras.

In the archives of Bauang, De Castro found this narrative written in Tagalog, signed by 25 ancient natives belonging to the *principalia* of the town, telling a story they had often heard from their parents and grandparents. In a place called Alitagtag, a *visita* of Taal north of the town, on many nights evil manifestations would occur, terrorizing the residents of those barrios and interfering with their efforts to get water from a spring nearby. This happened in the year 1595 more or less. To remedy the situation, a priest decided to have a cross made and installed in that place against the plague of malevolent visions. A post of *anubig* from a ruined house was carved, and with this, the apparitions disappeared.

It happened that a Visayan of bad character maliciously forced his wife to go at night to get water from the spring. The woman frightened of the phantasms placed herself under the protection of the cross and, while praying at its foot, water dripped from one of the arms of the cross and filled the pitcher. Thanking God, she returned home rid of the phantasms and from the threats of her husband.

The miracle occurred so often that she no longer feared going to the spring. Soon others heard of the miracle and many started to venerate the cross. They would light candles and pray the rosary. They also observed that when they went to pray at night, the cross would move around accompanied by various resplendent lights that looked like stars. This happened many nights in front of witnesses.

These lights were also seen by the minister from Rosario who, while passing by on his way to Taal on horseback, decided to examine them better but was unable to, having been overcome by an awful wave of terror. Thus, the prior of Taal had a stand made of *cal y canto* (limestone and rubble) for the cross and a hermitage of *nipa* and *cogon* was built where people could go to pray for favors from the cross whose cult and veneration was propagated much since then. Many favors, including cures to illness and locust infestations, were granted.

Having determined that the hermitage was too small for the number of people who went and that donations were increasing, the priors of Taal decided to transfer the cross to the church at Bauang, which was then located on the banks of the Laguna and the volcano. But another prior decided to take the cross to his church in Taal and secretly went with some people. But when they tried, the sky turned cloudy and there was thunder and lighting so awful that they were unable to continue.

The priest attributed the occurrence to ordinary happenings and tried again on other occasions, but he never succeeded due to the strange impediments that would occur. Finally, he gave up and decided to transfer the cross to the church of Bauang. This was done with great solemnity, and its cult begun to spread throughout the province.

Every May 3, a procession was held to take the cross to its hermitage in Alitagtag, where a sung Mass was celebrated with a sermon followed by a dance of children. In the afternoon, it was returned to the church where a novena was prayed for nine days.

Hair flair

YOUNG BLOOD

Vinnie Krissel M. Brugada

We want to know what the young are thinking about. What are their thoughts on current issues? We welcome contributions from the twentysomething and below.—Ed.

YOU are what you wear. And that goes for your hair too, if some people are to be believed. Blondes are dumb. Red heads are stubborn and temperamental. Girls with long, silky, shiny, jet-black hair are fit to be commercial models. Guys with dry, bushy and stinky hair full of "*sabit*" simply do not like the idea of bathing.

Hair plays an important role in self-expression. My beloved mother never forgets to remind me how lucky I am for having such straight, thick, shiny, black hair. So, since I was a kid, I was convinced that I had such beautiful hair.

When I was about two or three years old, I sported a very short hair with bangs. My relatives told me I looked like the young Billy Joe Crawford and since some of them wanted my mother's first born to be a boy, they were very happy about my appearance. I was very young and unaware of my right to choose the perfect hairstyle for myself then.

By the time my hair had grown some length and I began looking more like a girl, my parents decided to give me another haircut. Great. At the time, the movie "Ghost" was shown here, leaving a huge impact on my mom. She loved the movie so much that she needed something to make her remember it forever. Guess who agreed to have Demi Moore's super-short hairdo just to bring joy to her beloved mother?

When I started kindergarten, I was an incredibly shy and quiet student. My hair was longer, touching my shoulders. Since I was not used to being with a large number of other kids other than my cousins, my long bangs were carefully positioned to cover half of my face and hide my anxieties and insecurities. Think Violet of "The Incredibles"—I looked like her.

Eventually when I started having friends, my long bangs were pulled back by customized hair bands. Being unafraid to show your true self to others is such a soothing experience.

I was a lazy kid in elementary and had to transfer to another school. And I stopped wearing those hair bands that my mom made. I just let my hair fall freely—*nakalugay lang*, as we say in Filipino. I was so lazy that sometimes I simply didn't comb or even wash my hair. But even if I stopped caring for my hair, it stayed as wonderful as ever—until my parents separated.

My parents' parting is probably the biggest tragedy of my life. Although I was still very young when it happened (I was seven or eight, I guess) I was smart and mature enough to understand the situation. I knew I had to be strong, move on and remain as optimistic as ever.

It wasn't easy. I had to find some way of venting my disappointment and depression. And I found one.

I remembered my aunt asking me to pull off the gray hair from her head. Doing it felt good, so I decided to pull out some of mine. The first strand I pulled hurt like crazy, just like what I was feeling. I tried to remove another one. And another. And another. Before I knew it, pulling off hair was giving me some kind of temporary satisfaction.

I became bald. I was not completely hairless, but there were spots on my head without hair. The bald spots looked like airport tarmacs waiting for planes to land.

And the planes did land. Just when I stopped my unhealthy habit of pulling my hair and my hair started growing back, I became infected with *Pediculus humanus var. capitis*—pests that ordinary folk call hair lice. I must have gotten them either from a cousin or a classmate. My aunt told me that when the *kuto* multiplied to about a hundred, they would carry me away and cast me into a pit.

The experience made me realize that I had a tendency to be too close to other people. I was scared then, but now I see it as a natural part of childhood; almost everyone had lice anyway.

I started to notice boys when I was in high school. Consequently, I became more and more concerned about my looks, and especially my hair. I decided to let it grow until it reached my shoulders at least.

My boyfriend loved my hair. He liked it long and shiny… and he insisted that I always keep it down. I took care of my hair. I changed my shampoo, and began using conditioner and had it applied with the cream used for hot-oil treatment at least once a month.

But some things are not meant to last. When my boyfriend and I broke up, I did something that left him devastated. I cut my long black hair so that it was in line with my upper jaw. The haircut was for me the first step towards moving on after our breakup.

What I did felt great in the beginning. A new hairstyle, a new day. A new day, a new adventure. But as my hair grows longer, my feelings also become much stronger. So every time I feel a sudden urge to reminisce about the past, I give my hair a little trim because I know that the hair you cut with can never be glued back no matter how much you tried.

My first heartbreak turned me into a restless freak, craving for answers to love's unsolved mysteries. I wasted hours and hours thinking without possible answers. I brooded so much that I began having dandruff.

In an effort to control and reverse the damage, I tried every single anti-dandruff shampoo and conditioner available in the market. Unfortunately, none of them worked.

Hair containing tiny, white flakes is not good to have. A mind housing many problems and predicaments is not healthy to have either. When I finally convinced myself to clear up my mind and just fill it with pure optimism, the dandruff went away.

After all that happened, I have decided to change. Whatever may be the emotion I am nursing at the moment, I still try to look nice so I would feel good about myself. I take care of my hair even more, beautifying it with colorful hair bands, barrettes, hair clips and scrunchies. The color I use to decorate my hair expresses my current mood. Red is for when I'm in love, pink when I'm feeling pretty, blue when I feel a bit dejected, and purple when I feel optimistic. Thus no matter how I feel, my hair still looks fine.

Vinnie Krissel M. Brugada, 18, is a BS Biology sophomore at the University of Sto. Tomas.

NOTICE TO YOUNGBLOOD CONTRIBUTORS:

If you are sending your contributions by e-mail, please address it to youngblood@inquirer.com.ph together with your address and information about your age and the school, course and year you're enrolled in or if employed, the position you're holding and the company you work with.

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The government hospital as an emergency case

I HAD an indigent patient who was in delirium, but still was turned away from two government hospitals in Metro Manila. Fearing rejection from a third government hospital, (note that this was an emergency case), I called the Quirino Labor Hospital which, to the credit of the physician in charge, a certain Dr. Velasco, attended to him. But his problem did not end there. Now, he needs IV antibiotics three times a day, at P2,000 per vial.

Since resuming private practice, I cannot count the number of times I had to look for medicines myself to give to poor patients or for transportation money so they could go to a hospital when their condition warranted hospitalization, or to call emergency rooms so they could be properly attended to.

I used to work with the Senate in crafting health legislation. I have had training in health policy. Now, I am faced with the realities of the health system first hand. Day in and day out, I see the widening gap between policy and practice. There is no sufficient support given to government hospitals. When I was a physician-in-training, those hospitals could at least immediately give IV fluids and the first dose of emergency medicines. Now, even during emergency cases, the doctor asks the patient to buy IV fluids.

I will bet my last peso that, in an eyeball-to-eyeball situation with multinational companies, the government will blink first. Government would rather continue with parallel importations—which is really a puerile attempt to solve the issue on expensive drugs.

I suggest that citizen oversight groups be created at "ground zero." Pardon the term, but the parallelism between a disaster site and government hospitals may not be far-fetched. For example, how many emergency cases were turned away from emergency rooms today? How many died while waiting for a relative to buy the much-needed medicines or blood which the hospital could not provide even for emergency cases? How many died while waiting for the only doctor to be available because the others have resigned to work as nurses abroad?

It may be argued that hospitals are only the curative aspect of our health system, the rest of which is robust. Yes, but for many people, the government hospital represents and symbolizes the country's health system. But then again, it may be argued that the heart of the problem lies in an impoverished economy. Tell that to Fidel Castro. What I'm saying is that even with scarce resources, we can still give quality services to our people—with innovative thinking, a generous heart and a big dose of political will. Come to think of it, the system is very much like a patient in delirium, needing emergency treatment, but for whom nobody seems to care. Sometimes, I wonder if we, as a nation, value the poor man's life less than a rich man's. God help this Christian nation!

—EMMA P. VALENCIA, MD
empevee@yahoo.com

So far, so bad

SINCE their election, most of the lawmakers (senators and congressmen) have not done a satisfactory job. In fact, their performance is "so far, so bad."

Consider the following: (1) unnecessarily delay in the canvassing of votes in the last elections; (2) time-consuming and useless Senate and congressional hearings/inquiries (waste of people's money); (3) the House approval of the new VAT increase; and there are reports that sea and air transport fares, as well as their spare parts shall be exempted from tax; and (4) the still pork-laden 2005 budget.

But then, didn't we see the congressmen complaining against the senators for the latter's passing in toto the House-approved 2005 budget?

The Filipino people have suffered so much from the corruption and greed these lawmakers. I believe it is high time to ask the people, through a survey, whether we should rather have a unicameral form of government (I would opt for the lesser evil, which I think is the Senate).

I'm very sure I'm not the only one disappointed with the performance of our lawmakers. The survey findings can be used as basis for the discussion on constitutional amendment. And I firmly believe that the abolition of one of our legislative chambers would come as a great relief for our people.

—JOEL C. CATURAN
NHA-Bangkal
Davao City
july_477@yahoo.com

War on pork

IT WAS a war on pork. A useless one. A war on something that members of Congress shouldn't have gone into in the first place.

The House blamed the Senate for cheating on pork and so it called for the abolition of the Senate (which the House had been thinking of all the while). But the Senate throws the blame on the President.

The President, in fear of congressional ire, recommended the inclusion of the useless item of congressional pork in the budget of 2005. The better way could have been using all pork in the payment of our debt obligation.

Pork in the hands of the members of Congress is a wanton waste of the people's money. It is simply used to cosmeticize the image of politicians. I, for one, congratulate Sen. Alfredo Lim, a neophyte senator, for refusing pork outright; Sen. Panfilo Lacson for receiving pork only once; and Sen. Frank Drilon for opting not to receive his pork for 2005.

I think it is for the good of the country to have a pork-less Congress or, better yet, a Congress-less government in the meantime.

We are in the midst of a worsening leadership crisis. If the President believes in her moral ascendancy to lead the nation, she can decree all the reforms necessary to lift the nation from the mire of social degeneration and economic deterioration through a structural revamp of our system of governance and the renewal of people's values.

—MAJ. GEN. FORTUNATO U. ABAT (Ret),
fortunatouabat@yahoo.com

Gloriously in love with 'balinghoy'

I APPRECIATE very much Ceres Doyo's column on *balinghoy* (PDI, 03/17/2005). I enjoyed it tremendously. If I had married a cassava farmer, I would always have something that I like to eat.

Whenever I visit Cavite, my relatives would bring me a couple of pieces of cooked *balinghoy* or *sumang balinghoy* or a piece of *nilupak*.

On my way back to the US, I bring kilos of cooked frozen *balinghoy*. When I go to California, I buy a box of *balinghoy* at the Mexican market and bring it back to Missouri.

There is a Vietnam restaurant here in St. Louis that sells *ginataan* loaded with *gabi*, *balinghoy* and sweet potato. Heaven is a cup of warm *ginataan* on a winter day.

Again, thanks for that glorious article.

—EB GOLFO, MD
St. Louis, Missouri

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PRESIDENT Arroyo's and Foreign Affairs Secretary Romulo's silence on the rights issues in Japan's Immigration Act is deafening.

More concerned with remittances than rights

WHILE the Arroyo administration has expressed much concern about the stiffer requirements demanded of entertainers who want to work as such in Japan, it has been incredibly silent about the more ominous amendments—in place since Dec. 2, 2004—in that country's Immigration Act against undocumented migrants.

There are some 300,000 Filipinos in Japan. Around 77,000 of them are undocumented. Under the new amendments, migrant workers caught overstaying will be penalized with an average three-month imprisonment (possibly longer if one has no funds to pay for plane fare or the penalty) while undergoing deportation proceedings. He or she will also be blacklisted from reentry for 5-10 years and forced to pay a fine of up to Y3 million.

The Japanese government cites rising criminality and concern for public security as among the reasons for the amendments and subsequent crackdown on undocumented workers. However, statistics fail to support the claim that foreign workers are indeed responsible for more crimes in Japan. According to Amnesty International-Japan, the number of arrested foreign "criminals" in Japan rose by 23 percent in 2003, but more than half of them violated immigration laws only. In fact, only 1.45 percent of all crimes were committed by foreigners.

The amendments discriminate against undocumented migrant workers, making them criminals for being so. Moreover, it squeezes undocumented workers of even more funds to raise more income for the Japanese government.

While the new requirements for entertainers have yet to be implemented, the unjust immigration amendments against undocumented migrants are already in force. The silence of President Macapagal-Arroyo, Labor Secretary Patricia Sto. Tomas and Foreign Secretary Alberto Romulo on this urgent issue is deafening.

By not lifting a finger for the undocumented workers (some of whom entered Japan on entertainer visas), President Arroyo has shown that her interest in the dollar remittances of overseas Filipino workers overrides any concern for the human rights of the OFWs.

—MAITA SANTIAGO,
secretary general,
Migrante International.
49 Mayaman cor Matahimik Sts.,
UP Village, Quezon City

Teachers' low salaries shows education is not gov't priority

THE EDITORIAL, titled "Amazing" (PDI, 02/27/05) about two former UP teachers who, after getting their doctorate in physics from the United States returned to teach in their hometown in Bohol, is really a very remarkable one-of-a kind life story.

It helps to be a recipient of a "small high school" from a benevolent grandfather. Naturally, the outcome would be an unprecedented success with their their own "hands-on" and "one-on-one" manner of classroom teaching (no homeworks), with smaller groups of students. As owners of the school, they also could dictate (or forsake) their salaries, unlike their peers.

Now compare that to the rest of the country, where classrooms are overcrowded; students are burdened with much homeworks, left to themselves to study due to the lack of qualified teachers and good school facilities.

The lack of qualified teachers has been the most lamentable pressing problem of the Philippine education system—the result of government neglect.

In the United States and most advanced countries, the welfare of school teachers is deemed of paramount importance. A recent Gallup survey showed that 73 percent of the US public regard teachers as among the most honest and respected professionals, second only to the nurses who ranked no. 1 (79 percent).

The current "No child Left Behind" policy of the Bush Administration has made education among the US' top priorities and the starting salaries of a qualified US teacher nowadays is almost $40,000 annually (compared to less than $30,000 in the past) which is the median US household income.

In pre-war Philippines, public school teachers were the most respected members of the Philippine community; the teaching profession was one of the most financially rewarding, comparable even to law and medicine. It does not look good for the Arroyo government to turn a blind eye on the measly salary rates of public school teachers in the face of the soaring cost of living. President Macapagal-Arroyo should make education a priority of her administration. Because of low salaries, teachers would rather work at "call centers" or go abroad to be nannies.

Randy David, in his column "Education and poverty" (PDI, 02/27/05), cited the view of Tanzania's President Julius Nyerere who said that the most crucial element in his country's development program is "the education of our young women" who "are better carriers of progress to their children."

We, Filipinos, already know this because we have the most number of educated women in Asia since World War II. But education for the masses has remarkably been lagging behind and has gotten worse in the past few years because it hasn't been a government pribrity for a long time.

—CONRAD JAVIER,MD,
105, Partridge Lane, Chagrin Falls, Ohio
cigijay@yahoo.com

NoBox

What lies ahead for Manny Pacquiao?

PACMAN? WHAT ELSE—LESS MEDIA HYPE, MORE WORKOUTS, HUMILITY. AND... PRAYER—IT WORKS! Ü
—anonymous, *san pedro*

Manny will definitely make a comeback. Hard 2 admit, but he was soundly beaten by a better man dat night. and d bout is a classic!
—Raoul Vincent Gaceta, *Q.C.*

pacquiao is a loser and mayabang. Morales is a humble fighter and he's a real champ.
—steve Segovia, *pasay city*

Surely, definitely, absolutely MANNY PACQUIAO, our modern-day national hero, will bounce back.
—Juan Deveraturda, *Subic, Zambales*

Mas marami ang hahanga sa kanya, dahil sa katapangan at kagitingan na kanyang ipinamalas. Wound takes time to heal, but our unshaken belief on him lives, as we await for the next fight!
—Upe Noveloso, *Quezon City*

he has made us proud but will ultimately bring Filipinos closer 2 d truth dat if we all fight, we can have a brighter future.
—kristina m. gajita, *cag.de oro city*

Clearly, Manny has d potentials of being a great boxer! Unfortunately, there are too many sharks that surround him awaiting.
—lynete s. go, *davao city*

He can still be the great champion that he is but should add humility and focus to his arsenal of skills.
—Tyrone Guya, *Manila*

A very bright future wag lang agawin ng shobiz like Onyok sayang naman. Manny must stick to boxing becoz he's world class.
—jack rubiano, *samal, bataan*

Pacquiao definitely has more big fights, & championships coming his way. D setback wuz just a learning experience 2 help him grow.
—Jefferson Lim, *Q.C.*

more fights n more victories 4 Manny. more honors 4 our country.
—joseph galang, *pampanga*

its not yet the end of d road 4 manny. His defeat plus his character will make him a better fighter & a better champion in d future!
—michael gonzaga, *manila*

In my opinion, MANNY WILL STAND 4 HIS DEFEAT and RULE D super featherweight class and capture all titles and RETIRE 4 his best move.
—GAY TUPAS, *GOS city*

A good future because he has d right attitude.
—JENNIFER S. CABOTE, *Santiago city*

PROUD OF U. dnOt be ashamed of our erOrs & mistakes, such knowledge shows us 2day, we are wiser than yesterday, da next wOrld bOxing CHAMPION!
—Theresa Tanco, *Parañaque*

since Pacman is a determined n courageous fighter, i think he wud be able 2 win against Morales on their rematch!
—ferdz pamin, *makati city*

Pacman is a good fighter believe me sa kanya kc nakayanan nya paring lumaban hanggang 12 rounds, akalain nyo di sya natumba
—analou jaducan, *general santos city*

4 Manny Pacquiao, more n longer praktis n preparation. Da spirit is willing but d flesh is weak.
navarete.
—MERCEDES TEJERERO, *Valenzuela City*

I guess he will do a lot of training and call for a re-match.
—CAROLINE F. Ong, *manila*

A greener future. He can always look 4 work n d US. Unlyk most Filipinos hu hav 2 stay in dis country.
—jenvie

With such a slim margin of scores, his next fight wil surely be a big event.
—victor huelva, *Quezon city*

we must realize all his efforts, regardless of his failures in his match w Morales.
—Jurilex Maglinte, *Tandag S.*

D.S.

more blessings from d Lord... 4 he knows how 2 pray and give thanx 2 d Lord even in defeat.
—tricia n. Pribhdas, *quezon city*

No doubt Manny Pacquiao is 1 of d greatest boxers of all tym! Losing 2 Morales who is equally talented does not diminish him
—Lemuel Rodriguez, *Dumaguete City*

I'm a martial artist, n i know how much it hurts but its not about pain, but how you got hurt. pacquiao was bitn
—JED RELATIVO, *san pedro, LAGUNA*

He still holds d name a boxer 2 b feared of. Still own d respect. But he shud know now how 2 respect award bodies dat he snubbed b4.
—Edgardo Malayang, *Makati*

Now that Pacquiao has fallen back 2 earth, he shud have now learned a big lesson on HUMILITY.
—jerome escobedo, *cebu city*

Manny wiL aLways be pipoLs Champ, has great determination and sharing his bLessings wiL Sùn giv him unmatched pRizE in boxing.
—HENRY castillo, *Davao*

Pacquiao may opt 2 retire from pro boxing and invests his millions in business ventures or he may opt 2 enter showbiz!
—gerry singson, *vigan city*

The good life enjoying his winnings n a career n politics.
—Larry Novenario, *Las Piñas*

He is great, GOD-centered. it doesn't matter if he loose d battle, what matters is he gives his best, for me and fellow Filipinos.
—Maritess de Guzman, *QC*

Manny deserves a welcome for a hero. He truly embraces that one gr8t Filipino value of PERSEVERANCE. He has his FAMILY & COUNTRY after all.
—JAY ancheta, *CEBU City*

whether in boxing or other endeavors, he will continue to earn respect of people from different walks of life should he show the same discipline & heart.
—Christine Lim, *Mandaue City*

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Transport strike grips Central Luzon

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—The Samahan ng Tsuper at Operator sa Pilipinas (STOP) said it crippled public transportation services in four of seven Central Luzon provinces when its members stopped plying their routes on Monday.

Tom Talavera, STOP spokesperson, said the strike paralyzed 90 percent of the routes in Pampanga, 95 percent in Bataan, 60 percent in Zambales and 50 percent in Tarlac.

Jeepneys and Tamaraw FX vans also stopped plying their routes along the North Luzon Expressway (NLEx), he said.

Some 4,000 tricycle drivers in Mariveles, Bataan, launched a sympathy strike, Talavera said.

Picket

Some 500 protesters, led by the Alyansa ng Mamamayan at Transport Sector Laban sa NLEx (Aklas), picketed the San Fernando gates of the NLEx from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m.

Some 200 drivers protesting the 500-percent increase in rates at the improved 84-km highway, marched from the University of Philippines-Diliman campus to the Toll Regulatory Board offices in Quezon City to demand a rollback, reports gathered by the INQUIRER showed.

The plan to file at the Supreme Court a petition nullifying the contract of the Manila North Tollways Corp. to operate the NLEx for 30 years has been postponed, according to Aurora Broquil, spokesperson of the Kilusan para sa Pambansang Demokrasya.

Lawyers, Broquil said, were still finalizing the complaint that would focus on the supposed transfer of franchise to the MNTC from the state-owned Philippine National Construction Corp.

Police version

But Chief Supt. Rowland Albano, Central Luzon police director, said the transport strike was a flop after it failed to affect most parts of the region.

Albano said the province most affected was Bataan.

Bataan Gov. Enrique Garcia had canceled work in government offices and classes at all levels throughout that province.

Members of the Kapisanan ng mga Sasakyan sa Bataan (Kasakbayan) led the Bataan strike.

At the Bataan Economic Zone, only a few factories were affected by the transport strike since many companies sent vehicles to fetch their employees in Balanga City and Orion and Limay towns.

MILITANTS gather at the San Fernando, Pampanga portion of the North Luzon Expressway to protest sharp increases in toll for the use of the improved highway and continuing gas price increases. REM ZAMORA

In Orani town, Albano said three striking drivers were arrested for throwing stones at a bus.

He said their information showed that some of the striking drivers resumed operations by noon.

Free rides

Stranded commuters got free rides in trucks and buses fielded by the police, he said.

Work at government offices in Pampanga were suspended at noon Monday due to the strike.

Talavera said the strike was successful, noting that drivers, despite reduced income from the frequent oil price increases and high toll rates, still raised their voices against "burdens imposed by government." *Tonette Orejas and Greg Refraccion, PDI Central Luzon Desk*

Probe of student's death in Boracay difficult, say cops

By Nestor P. Burgos Jr.
PDI Visayas Bureau

ILOILO CITY—Police investigators looking into the death of a 20-year-old student on Boracay Island said they will have difficulty determining the cause of death of the victim after the student's family refused to have her remains autopsied.

Chief Insp. Jack Wanky, said relatives of Michaela Marie Gatchalian instead brought her remains to Negros Occidental yesterday morning en route to her hometown in Talisay City.

"They changed their mind," Wanky told the INQUIRER in a telephone interview.

He said Gatchalian's sister, Mikko, and an aunt did not explain why they refused the examination.

Investigators, however, will check the victim's medical history to shed light on the cause of her death early morning of Easter Sunday.

Allergy

Initial findings by physicians at the Boracay Hospital said Gatchalian died of cardiac arrest "secondary probably to allergy," said SPO1 Nick Cogolio, investigator of the Boracay Special Protection Unit (BSPU).

Wanky said the findings could not be conclusive until an autopsy can be conducted on the victim's remains.

Gatchalian died before reaching the Boracay Hospital after she lost consciousness at the rented room that she shared with her boyfriend, John Paul Sitchon, at Ralph's Wine (not Ralph's Place as earlier reported). The room is at the D'Mall complex near Boat Station 2 in Balabag village.

Gatchalian is the daughter of banker Mike Gatchalian and Maggie Villanueva of Talisay City in Negros Occidental who are now based in the United States.

Gatchalian, an incoming senior student at the Riverside College School of Nursing in Bacolod City, was supposed to spend the summer with her mother in the States.

Sitchon, 24, is the son of businesswoman Merle Sitchon and the late Generoso Sitchon Jr., a sugar planter, of Bacolod City.

Privacy

Merle asked not to comment on the incident, saying they needed privacy at the moment.

Sitchon told investigators that they had just returned to their room from a party at the Hey Jude Bar around 4 a.m. when Gatchalian complained of difficulty in breathing.

He said that after having shrimps and squid for dinner, he had beer while his girlfriend drank water. He also told investigators that they had stayed out late for two straight nights.

Wanky said both Sitchon and the victim's relatives said Gatchalian was asthmatic.

Police yesterday took urine samples from Sitchon but allowed him to go home to Bacolod City with police escorts.

Drugs

Wanky said they would dig deeper into the case because less than two hours before Gatchalian was brought to the hospital, members of the BSPU confiscated illegal drugs in a buy-bust operation at the Hey Jude Bar where the couple went earlier.

Police arrested Michael Ferren, 36, and Neil Celeste, 28, after suspected illegal drugs were found in their possession. They are now detained at the BSPU station in Boracay.

Among those confiscated were two tablets of suspected Ecstacy, a drug popular among adolescents and young adults and mostly sold in nightclubs and bars; a sachet of suspected cocaine and 13 P100 bills. *With a report from Carla P. Gomez, PDI Visayas Bureau*

Rally abroad vs mining set

CITY OF CALAPAN—The Association of US and Canadian Mindoreños (Auscam) has expressed strong opposition to mining in Mindoro where they said they plan to retire soon.

In a letter to the Sangguniang Panlalawigan, the Auscam cited studies on the negative effects of mining operations.

The group said it planned to rally in front of the Canadian Parliament and the American Congress for US and Canada mining companies to stop their operations in the Philippines. Auscam added that it supports the 25-year mining moratorium in Mindoro. *Madonna T. Virola, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

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ATIS VS SOLON, BOARD MEMBER

Bishops take up cudgels for Boracay tribe

By Nestor P. Burgos Jr.
PDI Visayas Bureau

ILOILO CITY—Catholic bishops have called on the government to provide security to the Ati community on Boracay Island in Aklan who are in danger of eviction by claimants of the land that they are occupying.

In a letter to President Macapagal-Arroyo, the Episcopal Commission on Indigenous People (ECIP) of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines (CBCP), asked assistance for the Atis staying at Sitio Bolabog in Barangay Balabag, one of three villages of Boracay.

"The Atis have been living in Boracay since time immemorial and have been claiming the lot being contested as part of their ancestral domain," said San Carlos Bishop Jose Advincula, ECIP chair.

Advincula said the ECIP received reports "that the Atis are being harassed and have been receiving threats of eviction" by people claiming ownership over the lot where the Atis reside.

Tony Abuso, ECIP staffer, said they were also calling for the support for the Atis from the various dioceses especially those near Boracay.

Nuns of the Holy Rosary Parish Ati Mission, who live with the Atis, earlier told the INQUIRER that caretakers of the property being claimed by the family of Aniceto Yap, brother of provincial board member Jose Yap, and the family of Aklan Rep. Florencio Miraflores, have put up barbed wire fences around and across the one-hectare Ati village.

The Atis have a pending application for a Certificate of Ancestral Domain Title (CADT), which they filed on Feb. 23, 2000 to prevent their ejection.

They re-filed the petition on Dec. 15, 2001 but the NCIP national office has not acted on the petition despite repeated pronouncements that the issue is one of the priority cases of the agency.

In response to the ECIP letter, Myrna Coagas, director of the NCIP Ancestral Domains Office (ADO), has directed the agency's office for Western and Eastern Visayas to "look seriously into the matter."

But NCIP regional legal officer Arnulfo Francisco and Rustico Teruel, Aklan Service Center officer, said they have been waiting for directives from the ADO to act on the Ati's petition.

EDWIN BACASMAS

EXPANDING SHORE
During low tide, the shores of Binon-an in Battad, Iloilo appear to expand further to the horizon, giving fishermen the chance to walk on the sand to their boats.

Negros lines up summer jobs for 1,700 students

DUMAGUETE CITY—At least 1,789 poor students in Oriental Negros can avail themselves of the annual Special Program for the Employment of Students (SPES).

Kendrick Villaluz, of the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) here, said 1,126 of these students will be accommodated by local government units (LGUs) in the province.

Private establishments will absorb the remaining 163, he added.

Villaluz said the SPES will work for 15 to 30 days, starting on April 1. But students who will work with private firms get bigger salaries than those in the LGUs.

Students assigned to the LGUs will get P100 to P150 a day while those in the private firm will be paid P180 to P188 a day, the minimum wage in Dumaguete for private sector workers.

Villaluz said the DOLE will take care of the 40 percent of the salary of SPES grantees. For Negros Oriental, he added the DOLE has allocated about P1.8 million for the purpose.

The LGUs that accepted the program are the cities of Bayawan, Bais, Canlaon and Dumaguete and the towns of Sibulan, Basay, Valencia, La Libertad, Guihulngan, Sta. Catalina, Amlan and San Jose.

Each LGU will accommodate 30 to 300 student workers. *Romy Amarado, PDI Visayas Bureau*

Aetas facing eviction from resettlement site in Porac

PORAC, Pampanga—At least 340 Aeta families displaced by Mt. Pinatubo's eruptions in 1991 are again facing displacement from a resettlement site here.

This came as the Supreme Court favored the right of the landowner, the Delfin family, over its titled 11-hectare property that is now the site of the Kamias Resettlement, said Bienvenido Capuno, chief of the Aetas living there.

Capuno said the property was within the *lutan tua* (ancestral domain) that the Aetas had earlier applied for a Certificate of Ancestral Domain Claim.

"*Migulo, miliswas la reng kabaryu ku* (My village mates were panicking)," he said, referring to the villager's reaction to the court demolition order issued in December.

The enforcement of the order was deferred recently on the intervention of Gov. Mark Lapid and Mayor Exequiel Gamboa, Capuno said on Monday.

Gamboa blamed the National Housing Authority and the defunct Mount Pinatubo Commission for developing the resettlement site in 1993 without determining whether the property was titled.

The rush to build new resettlements came as some 50,000 Aetas in Pampanga went to the lowlands to escape the eruptions. The old Kamias Village was within the 20 km radius of the volcano.

The Aetas, however, had resisted their prolonged stay in evacuation centers where many had died of preventable diseases such as diarrhea, Capuno said.

Gamboa said the provincial board has passed a resolution proposing to buy the property using local funds. Earlier, the municipal board sought funding from the Presidential Social Fund, but this has yet to materialize.

Lapid said he has struck down the proposal of the landowner to sell the property at P100 per square meter.

He has asked the provincial assessor and treasurer to assess the value of the property. Private appraisers are being involved, as required by law, he said.

"We need to follow the procedures here," he said. *Tonette Orejas, PDI Central Luzon Desk*

Ombudsman suspends RM awardee mayor of Naga

NAGA CITY—The Office of the Ombudsman has issued a preventive suspension order for "dishonesty" to Mayor Jesse Robredo, a Ramon Magsaysay awardee, for failing to disclose in his Statement of Assets, Liabilities and Networth (SALN) for three consecutive years a P1 million investment in a private corporation.

In the Ombudsman's suspension order dated Feb. 28, 2005, Mayor Jesse Robredo, 2000 Ramon Magsaysay Award recipient for government service, was ordered suspended for two months without pay "pending investigation" of his failure to disclose his P1-million investment in Naga Rits Corp. (NRC) in the years 1996, 1997 and 1998.

The Ombudsman found "merit in the prayer" for Robredo's preventive suspension that a certain Emilio Aguinaldo filed under case OMB-L-A-05-0099-B.

Unusual

But Robredo said the preventive suspension against him was unusual because, he said, it was the same case that the Ombudsman dismissed on Aug. 16, 2004 for lack of probable cause.

He said an "urgent motion for reconsideration" had been hand carried to the Ombudsman on March 18.

The Naga City chief executive, however, said he was confident that the decision would be overturned once their arguments were weighed.

Robredo said he could not be held liable for not disclosing in his SALN the investment he made in NRC because he had already divested his shares in 1995.

"I have nothing to disclose because I had divested my shares already," the awardee mayor said.

Overlooked

In the urgent motion for reconsideration, he cited that the Ombudsman "had overlooked its earlier findings" in his favor that he "did not deliberately neglect to state his investment (shares of stocks)" in his SALN for the years 1996, 1997 and 1998.

"It is envisaged and a pragmatic stance on the part of the respondent (Robredo) not to include in his SALN's his investment with the NRC, considering that the same shares were likewise divested in 1995," the same urgent motion for reconsideration reiterated.

Robredo said he had divested his shares of stocks in NRC because, he said, they were having some problems with decision-making in the corporation that he and his relatives owned.

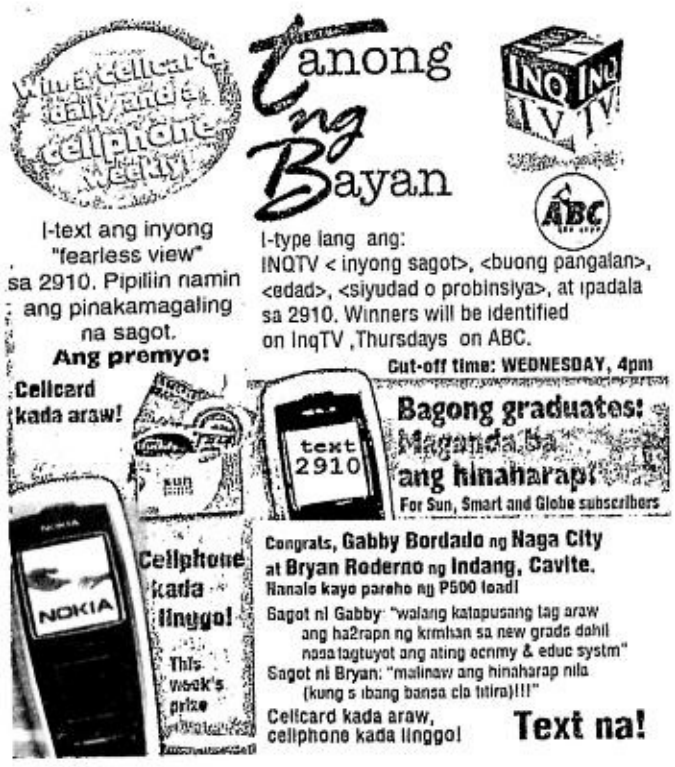
He said he reinvested in NRC after he arrived from the United States in 1999.

Conflict of interest

Robredo said there was nothing wrong with a government official engaging in business for as long as there was no conflict of interest.

He added that he was not given a chance to answer the complaint and that he only received the Ombudsman's decision on March 8.

Robredo asserted that his reelection had already condoned whatever misdeeds or wrongdoings, if any, that he had committed during his previous terms. *Juan Escandor Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*



Hacker preys on website of gov't offices, Bohol

TAGBILARAN CITY—Hackers, who are the bane of the Internet world, appear to find the Bohol provincial government website a favorite playground.

A notorious hacker broke into various government websites, including that of the Bohol provincial government.

The hacker, known as "Batistuta," has engaged in mass defacements of websites around the world. As a result, http://forums.bohol.gov.ph was inaccessible.

Instead, the hacker left an announcement: "Hacked By NaOnak."

The only other available information was the advisory with an apology: "Sorry, but this board is currently unavailable. Please try again later."

According to zone-h, an online repository of web defacements, the hacker also defaced other Philippine government websites including those owned by the House of Representatives, the National Power Corp., Quezon City and Quedan Corp.

The zone-h said "Batistuta" broke into the Congress website at 6:05 p.m. on Feb. 27. The Congress website was restored on March 4.

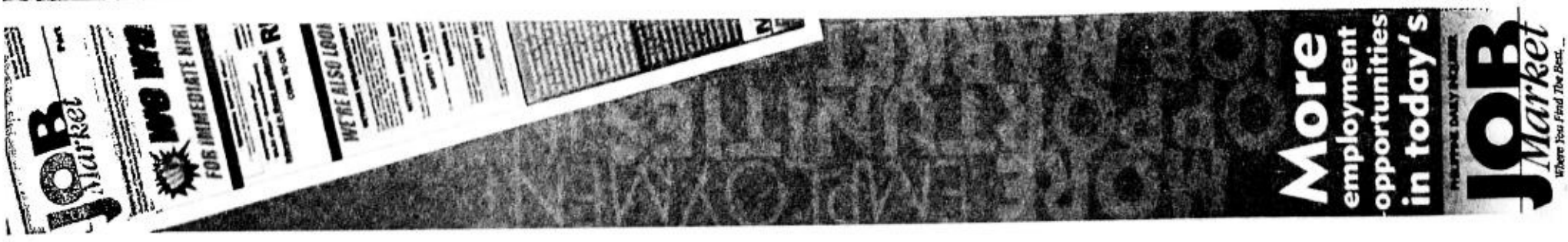
The hacker broke into the Congress website days before the lawmakers started trading barbs over the passage of the 2005 national budget.

In the case of the Bohol website, it was not immediately known if it had resumed operations when it was hit again by hackers.

As of March 28, http://forums.bohol.gov.ph remained inaccessible. *Chito Fuentes, PDI Visayas Bureau*

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

ANIMATED FIND
Two children frolicking on the beaches of one of 123 islands in the Hundred Islands National Park find a clown fish (inset), on which the character Nemo in the movie Finding Nemo was based, during their play in the sand. The children return the fish to the sea. The park is a protected area where Alaminos City Mayor Hernani Braganza's launched a campaign against illegal fishing.



Mountains show signs of life after trek ban

By Delfin T. Mallari Jr.
PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

LUCENA CITY—Only in its second year of rest from man's incursion, the mystical mountains of Banahaw and San Cristobal are showing signs that they are beginning to breathe life again.

"There are no more man-made trails that snake through the mountains. Fresh new trees are beginning to appear. Snakes, deer, wild birds and other mountain animals that had long disappeared are now returning and being regularly sighted," said Irene Arquilita, protected area superintendent assigned by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources.

She said farms along the slopes of the mountains have apparently been made a source of food of the forest animals. Last year, a team of American and Filipino biologists also discovered on Mt. Banahaw an unbranded rodent-like mammal with a bright orange color.

Rare

Dr. Lawrence Heaney of the Field Museum of Natural History at the University of Chicago said the animal is not of any species that can be seen anywhere else in the world.

Jay Lim, program officer of Tanggol Kalikasan, said the recent natural development only proved that mountains could regenerate on their own.

Lim said that during the mountain patrols conducted by the members of the Protected Area Management Board (PAMB) last Holy Week, new water sources have appeared in some parts of the mountain.

"Precious water is now beginning to appear again in some dried natural springs," Lim said.

Since April last year, the PAMB has sealed off several trails leading to the bosom of Mount Banahaw as part of the five-year rehabilitation program to resuscitate the mountain.

It was learned that Mirant Philippines, operator of the 750-megawatt coal-fired plant in Pagbilao town, recently commissioned local environmentalist group Kabanahaw to conduct an "environmental audit" of the two mountains.

Environment audit

"The research will help us (decide) what kind of intervention to take in our participation in the rehabilitation of Mt. Banahaw," Greggy Romualdez, Mirant public affairs manager, said in a phone interview.

But Manny Calayag, Dolores municipal and natural resources officer, stressed that massive rehabilitation is imperative.

"We have to show concrete results to the people after the five-year closure so that it will serve as an example to other mountain stakeholders in other parts of the country who have similar situations like Mounts Banahaw and San Cristobal," he said.

The more important aspects of the program have yet to be done, including the passage of a law that will establish the Mounts Banahaw-San Cristobal area and its peripheral buffer zones in Laguna and Quezon as a protected landscape, he added.

The House committee on environment and natural resources recently passed the bill at the committee level.

The Banahaw and San Cristobal mountains have a combined land area of 11,133 hectares covering portions of Lucban, Tayabas, Sariaya, Candelaria and Dolores towns in Quezon, and Liliw, Nagcarlan, Rizal and Majayjay in Laguna.

Lim said the government should also provide alternative livelihood to the slash-and-burn farmers that continue to destroy the mountains.

Arquilita said they had already started to introduce basic handicraft-making projects to *kaingineros* of Banahaw.

"It is our agreement with *kaingineros* that after they harvest their crops, they can no longer plant new ones," she said.

FILIPINO PRIDE TONEE DESPOJO/CDN
Workers at the Tsuneishi ship building plant in Balamban, Cebu proudly pose after launching their latest bulk carrier last month.

Gov't schools reminded not to collect graduation fees

By Joey A. Gabieta
PDI Visayas Bureau

TACLOBAN CITY—The Department of Education (DepEd) in Eastern Visayas has reminded public school administrators in the region to strictly follow the directive against collection of fees during this year's graduation rites.

More than 140,00 students in the region are set to graduate in the elementary and secondary levels this year this week and on the first week of April.

Erlinda Buena, DepEd regional information officer, reminded school administrators to comply with Memorandum Order No. 8 issued by Education Secretary Florencio Abad last Feb. 28 that prohibited the collection of fees from the graduates and the holding of extravagant graduation rites.

"This directive of the secretary was in the light of our economic situation, thus austerity measures must be strictly followed by these school administrators," Buena said.

The memorandum, however, was silent on the possible sanctions for those who violate Abad's directive. But Buena said the erring school administrator would have to explain to the secretary why his order was not followed.

Records of the DepEd-Eastern Visayas office showed that 91,219 Grade 6 pupils and 52,661 high school seniors would graduate this school year.

Last year, 88,137 pupils graduated in the elementary level and 44,558 from high school. There are 3,582 elementary schools and 369 secondary schools in the region.

The increasing number of graduates in both the elementary and high school levels in Eastern Visayas was an indication that parents have prioritized the education of their children, said Belen Hipe, DepEd chief of the planning division.

"There is now a strong urge among our parents to have their children . . . obtain even just a high school diploma," Hipe said.

Car firm worker reported missing

STA. ROSA CITY—A female employee of Honda Cars Philippines Corp. (HCPC) in this city has been missing since March 18, police reported.

Reports reaching the Office of Laguna provincial police director, Senior Supt. Jaime Calungsod Jr., identified the victim as Sharon Hope Nicolas Babiera, 22, married, an employee of HCPC in Technopark in Barangay San Jose, Sta. Rosa City and a resident of RFM Road Barangay Pulo, Cabuyao, Laguna.

A police report said the victim left her office at about 1:46 p.m. on March 18 and was seen boarding a black Honda Civic car bearing plate. no. UPF 665. Since then, she has not returned home nor reported to her office.

Investigators also said that prior to her disappearance, the victim had been receiving threats through text messages from her alleged suitor. Babiera sports a shoulder-long straight hair, is 5'2" in height and fair-complexioned.

She was last seen wearing denim pants, white T-shirt and clear eyeglasses. Anyone who knows her whereabouts is requested to contact Moises Nicolas through telephone No. 8323359 and the Sta. Rosa City Police Office. *Romulo Ponte, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

ROUNDUP

Halcon climbs discouraged

CITY OF CALAPAN—La Salle botany professor Emelina Mandia strongly urged climbers to spare Mount Halcon. But for those who will insist on climbing the mountain, strict guidelines have been set during a meeting of the Task Force Halcon last week. Mandia called for urgent conservation measures to save Mt. Halcon. The Task Force has called for clear legislation and the declaration of Halcon as a protected area.
Madonna Virola, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

Cordillera cops identify killer of Ilocos Bayan Muna leader

SAGADA, Mt. Province—The police have identified a suspect in the slaying of a Bayan Muna leader in the Ilocos.

Chief Supt. Noc Wong, Cordillera police director, said the recently formed special task force that looked into the killing of Romeo Sanchez, Bayan Muna Ilocos coordinator, has identified one Alvin Binuya as the gunman.

Wong, in a press conference with President Macapagal-Arroyo and local officials on Black Saturday, said the police have informed Bayan Muna officials of the development in the case and are awaiting Sanchez's family to file charges against Binuya.

Wong, however, did not provide details of Binuya's arrest or the suspect's background.

Sanchez was shot and killed by a lone gunman at the Baguio City Public Market on March 9.

In an earlier interview, Bayan Muna Rep. Satur Ocampo said Bayan Muna would revive talks with Ms Arroyo to put a stop to the killings of human rights activists.

Ocampo said an investigation made by Bayan Muna showed that the suspects in these cases were connected with the military and government militia forces.

"President Macapagal-Arroyo cannot wash her hands of this because she is the commander in chief of the Armed Forces [of the Philippines]," he said.

He said they sought the dialogue with Ms Arroyo last year when National Security Adviser Norberto Gonzales tagged Bayan Muna as a front group of the New People's Army.

In La Union, a Bayan Muna member was shot and wounded by a lone gunman in Aringay town on March 22.

Chief Insp. Eduardo Abaday, Aringay police chief, said lawyer Charles Juloya, 42, had just crossed the national highway in Barangay San Benito Sur when the suspect, armed with a .45 cal. pistol, attacked him.

Juloya, a former Aringay councilor and a brother of former Aringay Mayor Ramon Juloya, suffered from bullet wounds in the abdomen and left foot. He was taken to a hospital in nearby Agoo town where he underwent surgery.

The Ilocos Human Rights Advocate (Ihra) said Juloya, who ran and lost for vice mayor of Aringay during the 2004 elections, is one of the lawyers of the Abra 14, the group of Church workers and activists who were implicated in the 1999 murder of former rebel priest Conrado Balweg. *Desiree Caluza with a report from Yolanda Sotelo-Fuertes, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

200 poor families get houses

IRIGA CITY—Some 200 poor families from different barangays here will soon have their own houses with the help of the Gawad Kalinga Foundation (GKF) and the city government. Mayor Madelaine Alfelor-Gazmen said the project, costing P10 million, aims to make Iriga City squatter-free this year. The project is located in Barangay Perpetual Help. She said the GKF had already built 11 houses in January and will continue constructing houses on April 1-6, in time for the opening of the youth Gawad Kalinga Camp.
Michael Jaucian, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

Rapist gets death

URDANETA CITY—A man was sentenced to death for raping his six-year-old niece in Pozzorublo, Pangasinan, in 2000. Aside from the death penalty, Judge Rodrigo Nabor of the regional trial court here also sentenced the man to 17 years in prison for a separate case of child abuse involving his niece, now 11 years old. The man used to live a meter from the girl's house. The girl told the court that her uncle dragged her into his house in March 2000 when she was left alone. She said her father, a truck driver, and her mother, a laundrywoman, were out of their house working when she was abused. *Eric Montoya, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

GETAWAY THERECE TANQUINTIC/CONTRIBUTOR
The shore of San Juan, Batangas turns into a huge picnic ground for vacationers trying to get away from it all during the Holy Week but only to find their refuge crowded as well.

'Kaingin' bigger woe, say DENR men

DUMAGUETE CITY—Eleven *kaingineros* (slash and burn farmers) are facing charges in the wake of the intensified campaign by the Community Environment and Natural Resources Office (Cenro) against forest degradation.

Cenro officer Charlie Fabre said three of these farmers are facing charges in court for violating forestry laws.

The cases against the nine others are still pending at the prosecutor's office.

Fabre did not identify the 11 except to say that they were from the towns of Mabinay, Sibulan and San Jose.

Fabre said the farmers engaged in *kaingin* usually burn about one to three hectares of trees and grasses to convert it into a farmland.

But he told the INQUIRER that *kaingin* is a bigger problem in his area than illegal logging, as the fire set by the farmers also burn small trees and other forest products.

"We have no big time illegal logging activity in our area. It's actually *kaingin* that is very destructive to our forest," he said.

Fabre's area covers the towns of Pamplona, Amlan, San Jose, Sibulan, Valencia, Bacong, Dauin, Zamboanguita, Siaton and Basay and the cities of Tanjay, Dumaguete and Bayawan.
Romy Amarado, PDI Visayas Bureau

D. Gonzales; 66

PAOMBONG, Bulacan—Mayor Dominador Gonzales died on March 23 after suffering a heart attack while speaking at the weekly flag ceremony at the town hall earlier that day. He was 66. Gonzales, who was serving his third and last term, died at the Sacred Heart Hospital in the City of Malolos at around 6 p.m. Monday. Vice Gov. Aurelio Plamenco swore in Vice Mayor Donato Marcos as the new mayor of Paombong on Tuesday morning. Gonzales was buried at the Paombong municipal cemetery on March 27.
Carmela Reyes, PDI Central Luzon Desk

New land valuation

CITY OF CALAPAN—The provincial board has passed an ordinance adopting a new schedule of fair market values in all Oriental Mindoro towns. Authored by board member Ireneo Apasan, the ordinance calls for a uniform 20-percent increase in land valuation. This will be implemented in January next year. Provincial assessor Onisimo Naling said the bases for the valuation are sworn statement of taxpayers, deed of sale of land and interviews with landowners. This will avoid false pricing of the land being sold just to have a lower tax due, Naling said.
Madonna Virola, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

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METRO

E-mail: pr_metro@inquirer.com.ph

Text us your feedback: Inquirer met name/age/city/message to 2207 (Globe) or 283 (Smart) *Editor* **Ester G. Dipasupil** ■ *Assistant Editor* **Cenon B. Bibe Jr.**

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Fat profits in metro's booming lipo clinics

By Christian V. Esguerra

MANY women—and men—are drawn to so-called vanity clinics, regardless of the costs. PDI PHOTO

WHO SAYS we're going through hard times?

At a time when Filipinos are expected to tighten their belts, a good number still find the time—and the money—to spend on liposuction and vanity clinics in trendy Metro Manila.

The fad is no longer exclusive to show business personalities, lipo surgeons say, with housewives, comedians, overseas entertainers, and even housemaids now lining up for nose jobs or trim torsos.

Take the case of this 28-year-old maid. She went to Dr. Reyvic Cerilles, a US-trained cosmetic surgeon who holds clinic on Taft Avenue, after her boyfriend left her for another woman. "The new girlfriend had told her she had a 'bad' nose so her boyfriend dumped her," the doctor told the INQUIRER, quoting the maid. "Dejected, she went to me and said she wanted a new nose."

The maid had saved up, and practically spent her salary for a nose lift, a procedure that usually costs between P30,000 and P40,000, he said. "That's the way it is now," he said. "Liposuction and all these procedures have ceased being mere fads. They're now generally accepted, and more and more people are finding ways to look beautiful."

In his Manila clinic alone, Cerilles said he receives an average of 10 patients daily and does five operations weekly. In the afternoon, he moves to his Magallanes Village clinic in Makati City where he sees other patients. By his reckoning, there are at least 20 similar clinics all over Metro Manila. These don't even include the Belo Medical Group's usually jampacked base on Tomas Morato, Quezon City.

Cerilles has no problem with his Magallanes patients. They have money to waste. Most of them are wives of colonels and generals, he said. What interests him are those that line up at his Taft Avenue clinic just across the Philippine General Hospital. They're anything but filthy rich, he added.

"You see, it's not really about merely looking good," he explained. "Entertainers abroad, for example, want a nose lift or a smaller waist because that would make them more competitive in the industry."

According to Cerilles, breast augmentation costs somewhere between P90,000 and P120,000. A nose lift would set you back from P20,000 to P25,000, and a bleaching job, from P2,000 to P3,000.

Mesotherapy, a cheap alternative to liposuction using the chemical phosphatidyl choline to dissolve fat, is not exactly that affordable. Four sessions cost around P20,000.

"In my case, I adjust the prices depending on the patients' [capacity to pay]," he said. "I even do operations for free, as long as I know the patient really needs it, say, for a job abroad. I consider it part of the training I had in medical school."

HK-bound traveler with ₱11M nabbed

By Nikko Dizon

AN ESTIMATED P11 million in cash was seized from a Filipino traveler bound for Hong Kong by the Bureau of Customs early yesterday morning at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport (Naia).

The money came in P1,000 bills found in the luggage of Joselito Canete Bermoy, a passenger of Cathay Pacific flight CX 904 on its way to Hong Kong that was scheduled to leave at 7 a.m.

Naia Customs District Collector Ricardo Belmonte said 109 bundles of bills were found inside Bermoy's luggage.

A report said that at around 5:40 am, customs inspectors at the Departure Area told their superiors that a huge amount of money had been discovered inside Bermoy's luggage that he was supposed to check in.

The inspectors noticed the contents inside Bermoy's luggage after it had passed through the X-ray. Bermoy claimed that the items were dried fish.

But when the inspectors told him to open the bag, they said they noticed Bermoy began to "tremble." He also told them that he could not find the key.

SPO2 Romeo Estoesta then frisked the passenger and found the key to the luggage.

The inspectors found the money wrapped in two green plastic bags in between Bermoy's clothes and other personal items.

Except to say that he was a businessman and that he owned the money, the 26-year-old Bermoy, who hails from Bohol, declined to talk further to reporters, saying that he would wait for his lawyer before giving a statement. Bermoy's passport also showed that he had made frequent trips to Hong Kong.

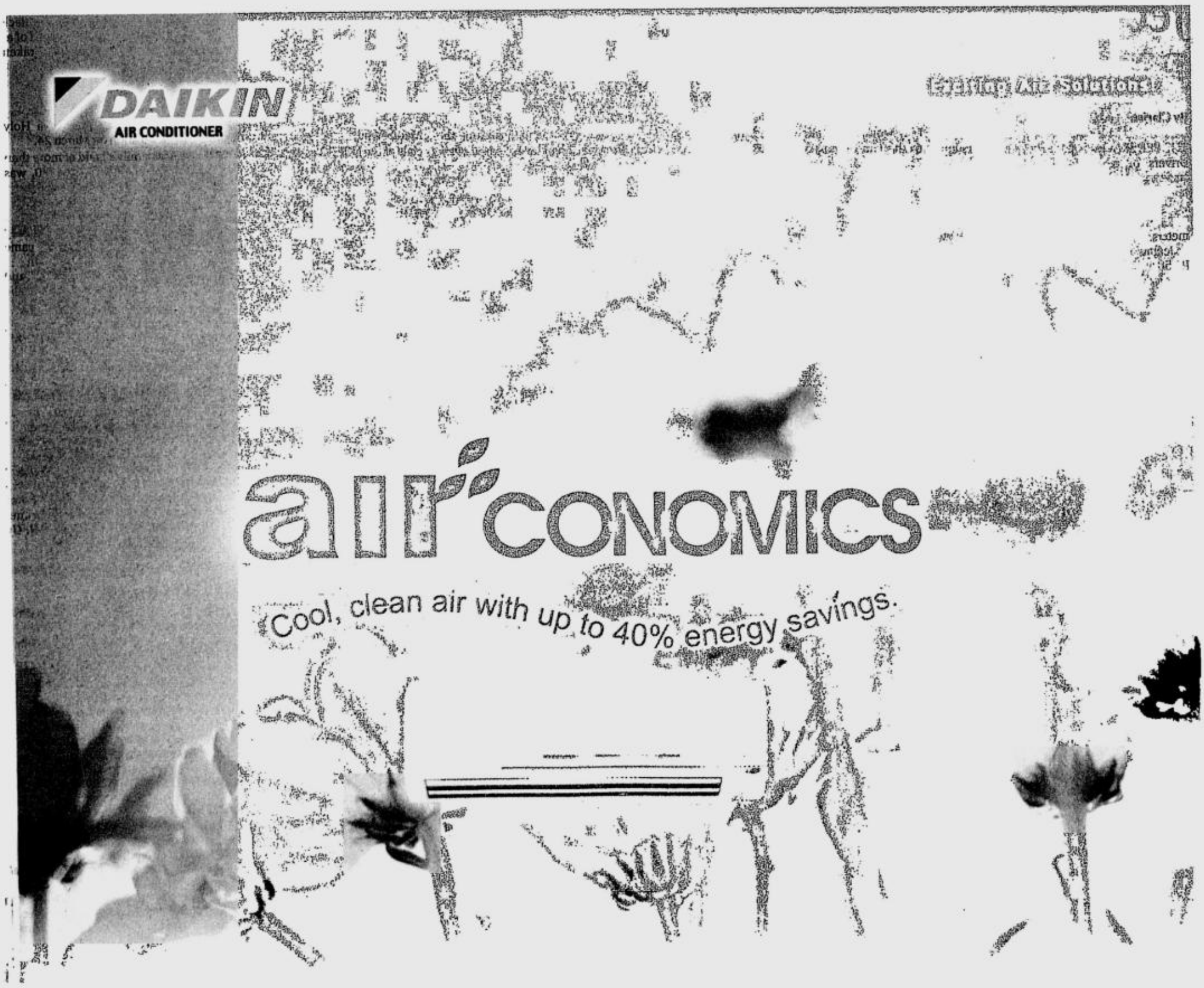
Liwayway Mendoza, chief of the Departure Operations Division, said Bermoy told customs inspectors that somebody else had asked him to bring the money to Hong Kong.

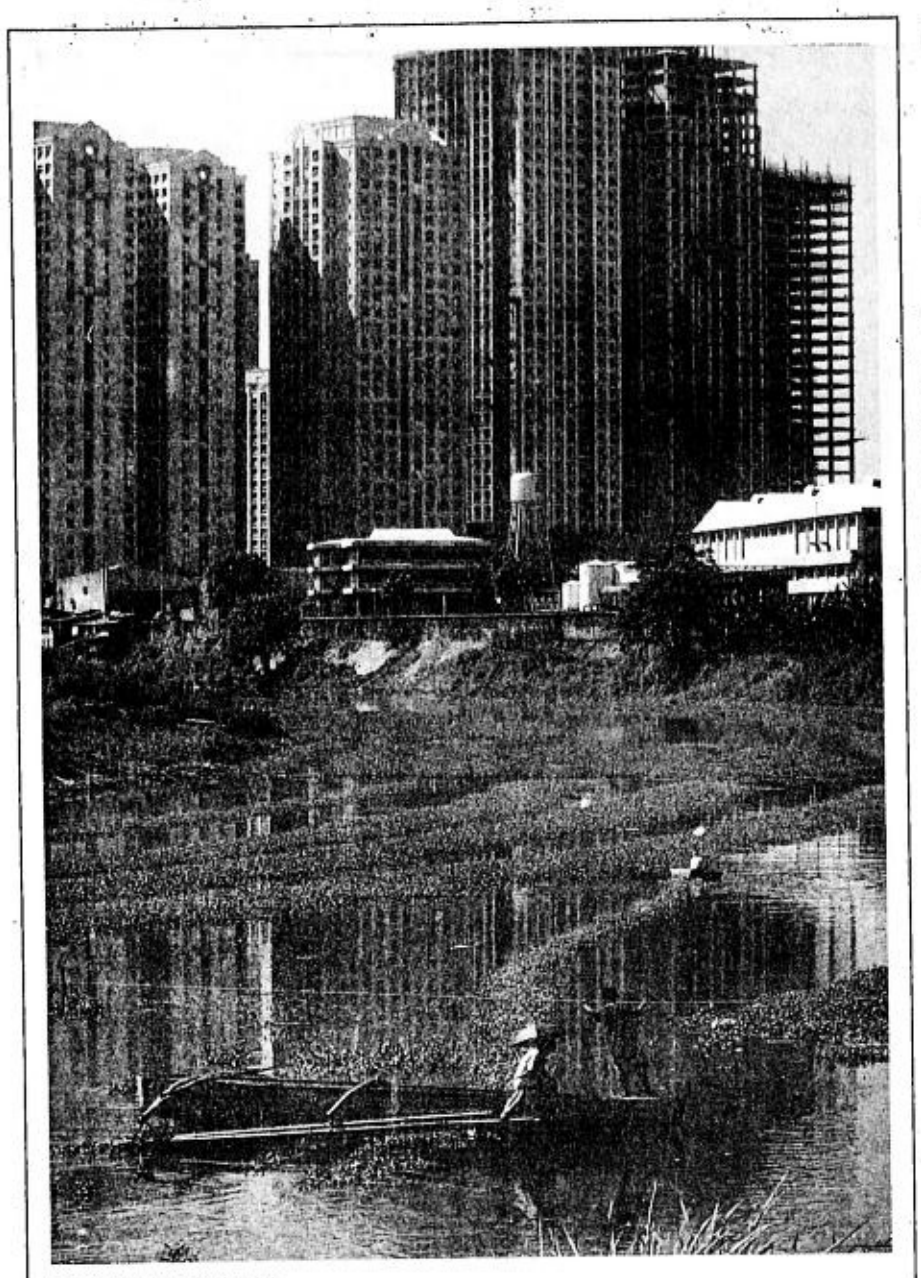
Belmonte said that Central Bank Circular No. 98 allows a maximum of P10,000 to be brought out of the country, to control the movement of local currency.

"Bringing out an excessive amount of Philippine pesos could actually destabilize our economy," he explained.

On the other hand, the government limits to US $10,000 the amount that travelers could bring out of the country. Anything in excess should be declared before customs authorities.

Belmonte said passengers carrying more than P10,000 are told about the circular and are advised to leave the excess amount.





DECEPTIVE CALM
A boatman ferries two passengers across the seemingly placid Marikina River. But residents warn riders not to be taken in by the rustic scenery. Two boys drowned in the river's deep portion on Maundy Thursday. ERNIE U. SARMIENTO

Tumana no longer open to motorists

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

CLAIMING that the Marikina City government failed to keep its promise, a private subdivision has closed its gate to motorists using the Tumana Road on their way to Quezon City.

"Motorists can no longer pass through our Tumana Gate," Annie Santiago, executive assistant to the president of the Soliven Group of Companies, operator of the subdivision, told the INQUIRER yesterday.

The road passing through the gate of the Loyola Grand Villas Subdivision used to be a shorter route for motorists coming from Marikina City going to Katipunan Avenue in Quezon City. But the private developer closed the gate on March 19.

Santiago said they were forced to close the gate after the Marikina City government failed to clear several areas in the exclusive subdivision of illegal settlers.

The clearing of these areas was part of the memorandum of understanding the developer and the city government signed in 1995.

"These areas are prime lots. How can we sell the lots if they are occupied by illegal settlers?" Santiago added.

City Administrator Melvin Cruz admitted that removing the illegal settlers was difficult. "But we are trying to do our best. It's just taking a long time. They have to understand that it's not that easy," he said.

The city government had tried conducting surveys in the area, but some residents would threaten city hall employees with sharp weapons, he said.

Cruz added that there was no available relocation site for the 1,200 families yet.

Because of the closure, many motorists forced to use other longer routes, like those from Barangay Barangka going to Aurora Boulevard, or Barangay Nangka to Batasan Road, are complaining.

Citing "violations of the city government," the developer had warned motorists as early as October 2004 that they would close the gate. Santiago said they exhausted all means to hold a dialogue with the city government. Their few meetings proved futile, she added.

"I had been trying to get an appointment with Marikina City Mayor Marides Fernando," Santiago said.

The INQUIRER went to the mayor's office yesterday morning, but was told she had several meetings. In the afternoon, the INQUIRER again called Fernando several times, but no one took the calls.

The developer had earlier agreed to a right-of-way arrangement with the city government. But the gate the developer closed last week remains part of private property.

Pasay City spruces up for April IPU summit

By Jocelyn R. Uy

PASAY CITY Mayor Wenceslao "Peewee" Trinidad said his city was ready for the 112th Inter-parliamentary Union (IPU) General Assembly April 3-8 at the Philippine International Convention Center. Around 2,000 delegates are expected to attend the event.

Pasay City has cleaned and repaired sidewalks, center islands and service roads, Trinidad said in a phone interview, in coordination with the Metro Manila Development Authority.

Squatters on Roxas Boulevard were moved from the main street to an area where they would not be so visible.

The Andrews Avenue fronting the Naia Terminal 3 had been cleared of tricycles. Trinidad said they would provide alternative routes.

Early next week, the mayor would meet with restaurant and nightclub owners to ask them "to make the visitors' trip as pleasurable as possible."

As for security measures, he said a new command center had been set up at the Cuneta Astrodome. Pasay police chief Sr. Supt. Rosendo Franco will hold office there until the end of the IPU meeting.

Meanwhile, the National Capital Regional Police Office (NCRPO) is on full alert status throughout the week. The New People's Army, the armed wing of the Communist Party of the Philippines, celebrates its 36th founding anniversary today.

NCRPO chief Avelino Razon, who commended his men for an uneventful Holy Week, said checkpoints would remain in strategic areas.

The full alert status would remain until after the IPU assembly, which will be attended by United Nations Secretary General Kofi Annan.

In another development, Muslim leader Datu Ambiong said they would continue to monitor possible terrorist activities in their communities even after the Holy Week.

"Peace is the key to prosperity," Ambiong, head of the National Muslim Peace and Order Coordinating Council (NMPOCC), said in a phone interview.

Ambiong initiated the deployment of Muslim volunteers to look out for possible terrorists. "We want to continue doing this so people would see that we are not a threat to them and we actually want to help restore peace and order in the country," he said.

He said Muslim leaders in Metro Manila would meet next week with officials of the NCRPO to establish a deeper relationship between the police and Muslim communities.

A bigger meeting in Mindanao to tackle peace and order issues might be held at the end of the month.

Meanwhile, the wives of suspected terrorists Tyrone "Daud" Santos and his brother Ahmad (pronounced Ak-mad) accused the military and police of "recycling" suspects in the government's antiterrorism campaign.

Tyrone's wife Jamillah and Ahmad's wife Fatima said their husbands, linked to the discovery of explosives and bomb materials in a Fairview apartment last week, were fall guys.

The military said last week that Tyrone's arrest in Cubao led to the seizure of some 600 kilos of bomb materials.

Tyrone is under military custody while his brother Ahmad, reportedly the leader of the Raja Solaiman Revolutionary Movement, an extremist group composed of "Balik Islam" converts, is in hiding. *With Margaux C. Ortiz and D.J. Yap*

Ex-AFP chief loses ₱6 million to thieves

EVEN this former chief of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) was not spared from robbers during the Holy Week.

Former AFP chief Diomedio Villanueva found out on Black Saturday that he was robbed of at least ₱6 million in cash taken from his house on Jusmag Street, Fort Bonifacio, Taguig City, police said.

Villanueva went to Tagaytay City with his family for a Holy Week vacation on March 24.

The family's maid of more than a year now, Elena Ruiz, 50, was the only one left in the house, PO2 Ehron Baluat said.

Villanueva found out that he had been robbed on Saturday morning when the family came back from a two-day vacation.

The cash (P250,000 and $7,000) was kept in a vault in the master bedroom, his wife Erlinda told police.

There were no signs of forced entry in the retired general's house, police said.

The family's maid was being eyed as the primary suspect, police added.

Ruiz, on the other hand, told police that she was innocent.

Samples of the maid's fingerprints had been sent to the Scene of the Crime Operatives to determine whether or not Ruiz was involved in the crime. *Jocelyn R. Uy*

Jeepney group wants ₱8.50 minimum fare

By Clarissa S. Batino

THE FEDERATION of Jeepney Operators and Drivers of the Philippines (Fejodap), the largest transport group in the country, will seek a P3 increase in minimum fare plus 30 centavos for each additional kilometer.

The minimum fare covers the first four kilometers.

Jeepneys currently charge a minimum of P5.50 and P1 for every additional kilometer.

Fejodap's petition, to be filed late this week, takes into account the 45 percent increase in the price of diesel since June 2004 when jeepneys last raised their minimum fare by P1.50. Diesel now costs P26.25 a liter compared to P18.10 in the middle of last year.

Vigor Mendoza, lawyer for Fejodap and other transport groups, said the proposal also considered the likely increase in pump prices due to the value-added tax. He said the petition would also seek fare adjustments for jeepneys using the North and South Luzon Expressways (NLEx and SLEx, respectively).

"We have exhausted all our options and we have no choice but to ask for a fare increase after the alternatives we presented... were ignored by authorities," said Mendoza.

Fejodap president Zenaida Maranan said they would most likely submit their petition to the Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board (LTFRB) on Friday.

Maranan said the 250,000-strong Fejodap would not join a strike planned by other groups.

But she said Fejodap would respect the decision of other groups.

The Philippine Confederation of Drivers Organization-Alliance of Concerned Transportation Operators (Pcdo-Acto) earlier asked for a P2 increase in minimum fare.

Maranan said a P2 adjustment would not be enough.

Other jeepney groups like the Alliance of Transport Operators and Drivers Organization of the Philippines (Altodap) and the Makati Jeepney Operators and Drivers Association (Mjoda) will join the Fejodap petition.

Maranan said she would try to get the Pinagkaisang Samahan ng mga Tsuper at Operators Nationwide (Piston) to join them.

Fejodap would seek a smaller increase if oil products remained exempted from VAT.

Mendoza said they might ask for an additional 50 centavos to P1 for jeepneys using the NLEx and the SLEx.

Should elective officials have college diploma?

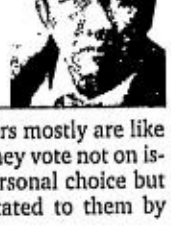
A BILL has been filed in the Senate seeking to make it mandatory for all candidates for elective positions to have a college degree.

The bill, filed by Sen. Miriam Defensor-Santiago, would also require voters to be educated or literate.

Maid Miriam is right. An educated or literate electorate would make for an intelligent choice of local and national leadership.

The late dictator Ferdinand Marcos allowed illiterates to vote in a mock election during the martial law era. Before then, citizens who couldn't read or write could not vote.

Electing a public official is a strictly private or secret matter. How can a voter make his choice private or secret when he needs somebody else to write for him on the ballot?



ON TARGET
Ramon Tulfo

Illiterate voters mostly are like driven cattle. They vote not on issues or their personal choice but on what is dictated to them by their leaders.

Methinks citizens who can neither read nor write have no business taking part in selecting people who will rule the country. Let's face it: they're a nuisance.

However, Maid Miriam's proposal to disqualify from holding public office people who are not college graduates goes overboard. There are many elective officials who are college or high school dropouts and yet they're better than their counterparts who hold baccalaureate or master's degrees. A college degree does not make one intelligent.

Of course, I'm not referring to former President Erap. But one distinguished Cabinet member and legislator who didn't finish college is the late Blas Ople.

* * *

The Philippine National Police requires all its members to have a college diploma. Those who are not college graduates by 2009 will be forced to retire from the service.

All new recruits are now college graduates. But have you heard or read the reports of these college boys and girls in the PNP? You'll shake your head in disbelief when you listen to them talk in English. Did these guys really go to college, you'll ask yourself.

Here's an example of a police report filed by an investigator: "According to the herein witness, he did not actually saw the crime being comited (sic) not in front of his present but somewhere in the vecenity."

Wow! *Tinagalog o binisaya mo na lang sana, pare.*

And have you attended a court session where the judge, prosecutor and defense attorney talk in English that only they can understand?

Have you heard a prosecutor ask a witness during cross-examination: "What did you did have done?"

In other words, of what use is a college diploma if the one holding it can't express himself clearly?

METROBRIEFS

No to rescue

THIS man chose to die in the fire than to live a life full of "family problems." Manuel Dieocareza, 43, allegedly set his sister's house on fire yesterday at Purok 7 PNR Site, Alabang, Muntinlupa City, arson investigators said yesterday. The fire, which started at 9:31 a.m. yesterday, destroyed at least P500,000 worth of property, leaving 15 shantles ruined and 19 families homeless. Refusing to be rescued, Dieocareza died in the fire, SFO2 Jose Bolando Jr. said, adding that they had a hard time getting close to Dieocareza because he had gone out of control. Prior to the fire, Dieocareza had attacked two youngsters in the neighborhood, police said. *Jocelyn R. Uy*

Fugitive nabbed

NAVOTAS City's ninth most wanted, Louie Acosta, has been apprehended by police who had been monitoring his whereabouts for four years, Northern Police District Supt. Raul Gonzales said Acosta, a suspect in a rape case, was caught by police on Saturday near his house. Acosta reportedly left for Japan after he was accused of rape with five others in 2001. News that he was back brought police to Barangay Tanza where he was arrested without putting up a fight. *Nancy C. Carvajal*

RD winners

Hedeliza Hermosura, Lorelyn Garcia, Anna Lee Jimenez, Lovella Sanarez, and Ramon Salazar were named winners in the recent Asia-wide 2004 Reader's Digest Sweepstakes draw. The winners received their prizes from Lilet Camara-Yan (right) of Reader's Digest Asia and Fabio Enriquez (left) of A-Z Direct Marketing, Inc.

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SPORTS

E-mail: pr_sports@inquirer.com.ph

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SPORTS TV

Compiled by L. Mangulat

GOLF: LPGA Kraft Nabisco Championship; 6 p.m.; ESPN - See how J-Ro starts off in the first round.

TENNIS: ATP Nasdaq 100; 8 a.m. (r-6 p.m. and 10:30 p.m.); STAR Sports - Check out tennis action from Miami.

BASKETBALL: NBA - Cavs vs Hornets; 9 a.m. (r-9 p.m.); Solar Sports - LeBron leads Cleveland as they try to party in New Orleans.

Eagles eye redemption under new coach Black

NORMAN Black wants the Eagles to have an up-tempo game. AUGUST DELA CRUZ

By Jasmine W. Payo

THE ATENEO Eagles are seriously looking to turn their fortunes around.

After failing to meet expectations in the last UAAP season, Ateneo yesterday signed up multi-titled mentor Norman Black as its head coach.

"I'll try to develop the character of the team," said Black, who replaced youthful coach Sandy Arespacochaga. "I want a good defensive team. I want the players to have the ability to run, to shoot with a high percentage and have an up-tempo game."

A title-favorite in the 2004 UAAP season, Ateneo was highly criticized for collapsing in the second round after an impressive seven-game sweep.

The Eagles settled for third-place, finishing with a 10-5 record.

"In the last two weeks, it was deliberated on by the university, the administration, management and the coaching staff," said Ateneo team manager Paolo Trillo.

Rebuilding process

"Coach Norman and Sandy had already worked together and they make a good team. It's all part of the rebuilding process."

Black joined the Ateneo as team development consultant in May 2004.

Arespacochaga, who was appointed as head coach in December 2003 replacing the resigned Joel Banal, will remain in the staff as Black's first assistant.

"I have no problem with the setup," said Arespacochaga. "Things are clear with ourselves, where we want the team to go."

Although the next UAAP season will not kick off until July, Black expressed confidence that he has enough time to make the squad regroup.

"There will be adjustments in the system but they won't be as big as you think," said Black, who won 10 PBA championships as a coach, including a grand slam for San Miguel Beer in 1989. "It will take some time, admittedly. But I think we have enough time to get it done."

The Eagles, who last won the UAAP title in 2002, remain as one of the top picks this season. Thus, Black understands the high demands he has to face.

Pressure to win

"Every time you're involved with coaching, there's always the pressure to win," he said. "But my goal is to make the team perform to its potential."

Black, however, remains cautious with his forecast this season.

"It depends on who stays and who'll leave," he noted. "The balance of power depends on some people who will exit to the PBA. So it's hard to pick the top teams."

L.A. Tenorio, Ateneo's prized point guard, is reportedly considering leaving for the pros.

"We're optimistic that he will still be part of the team," said Black.

PLDT chief executive officer Manny Pangilinan, the Eagles' top patron, also remained guarded with his predictions.

"It's difficult to say how strong the team will be in the coming season," he said. "Other teams are also rebuilding. It's part of our job right now to manage expectations.

"But I think we have the right combination. Norman has the experience and Sandy has the talent."

Fans want wily Murad out of Team Pacquiao

By Salven L. Lagumbay
Contributor

WHAT was on everybody's mind became public yesterday when an online poll conducted by Manny Pacquiao's website revealed his fans want him to sack American promoter Murad Muhammad.

As of 5 p.m. yesterday, 86 percent of some 480 respondents had ticked off Murad's name when the website www.mannypacquiao.ph posed the question: "Who do you want to be ousted from Team Pacquiao?"

The initial result of the poll did not surprise many boxing fans, especially in the wake of Pacquiao's admission, aired on TV, that he has already severed ties with Murad.

Pacquiao said he is also planning to sue Murad for failing to turn over about $2.8 million, representing 40 percent of the revenue generated by the HBO pay-per-view sales of his recent classic clash with Erik Morales at the MGM Grand Garden Arena.

Pacquiao, upon arrival at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport from Los Angeles, told mediamen that Murad had refused to give him the PPV share.

Commenting on the issue, Freddie Roach, Pacquiao's American trainer, had earlier said a "promoter should not earn more than the boxer."

According to reports, Pacquiao was entitled to 40 percent of the PPV sales, with Morales getting the other 40 percent and promoter Bob Arum the remaining 20 percent.

PACQUIAO wants his $2.8 million.

Those who ticked "I don't care" in the poll came in second with 4.6 percent, while those who want to get rid of Pacquiao's business manager, Rod Nazario, came in third with 4.4. Only 1.9 percent voted against Roach and 1.7 against manager Shelly Finkel.

IMPORT SWITCH

Realtors look to 'Great White Hope'

By June Navarro

STA. LUCIA Realty is hoping a white guy could solve its import woes in the ongoing Philippine Basketball Association Fiesta Conference.

Coach Alfrancis Chua said the Realtors are tapping former Barangay Ginebra import Ryan Fletcher to replace Raheim Brown following three consecutive setbacks.

Dubbed as the "Great White Hope" during his Ginebra days, the 28-year-old Fletcher combines accurate perimeter shooting and crafty low-post moves.

And although shorter than the average 6-foot-10 ceiling of reinforcements, the 6-7 Fletcher can effectively shift from small forward, power forward to center or vice-versa at any given situation.

"We hope that Ryan could get on the plane by Wednesday so he could practice with the team early," said Chua.

Even if Fletcher arrives within the week, he would sit out the game against the Red Bull Barako as the Realtors have decided to suit up Brown one more time, according to Chua.

"But we will definitely field him (Fletcher) against his former team (Ginebra) on April 6," he added.

Fletcher had brief stints with the Gin Kings in the 2000 and 2001 Commissioner's Cup.

He averaged 26.8 points, 15.2 rebounds and 3.6 assists in five games in 2001 before Jerald Honeycutt replaced him.

Team sources said the 6-foot-9 Brown is nursing a strained calf muscle.

Former shot put queen dies, hubby can't bury her

By Marc Anthony Reyes

HERE'S another sad tale highlighting the plight of former national athletes.

Consuelo Salibio-Lacusong, holder of the national record in women's shot put the past 30 years, passed away last March 21 at age 58.

Since then, her remains have lain in state at her residence in Malanday, Marikina, as her family has been unable to raise enough money to bury her.

Accompanied by track legend Elma Muros-Posadas, Consuelo's husband, Manuel, yesterday sought Philippine Sports Commission officer-in-charge Butch Ramirez, and former Gintong Alay chief and now PSC consultant Michael Keon for help. Both sports officials, however, were not in their respective offices.

Manuel, who like his wife was a former Navy enlisted personnel, said they don't have the money to pay for the funeral services so that her wife can be finally laid to rest.

Lacusong's national mark of 13.92 meters still stands. She achieved it during the National Open on June 22, 1975, in Cebu City.

Her achievements include silver medals in the 1977 and 1983 Southeast Asian Games and a bronze in the 1981 SEAG held here.

At the peak of her career, she was among the Gintong Alay stable of athletes that included then rising superstars, Muros-Posadas, Isidro del Prado and Lydia de Vega-Mercado.

The Philippine Amateur Track and Field Association has endorsed financial support for Salibio-Lacusong, who also left two grown children.

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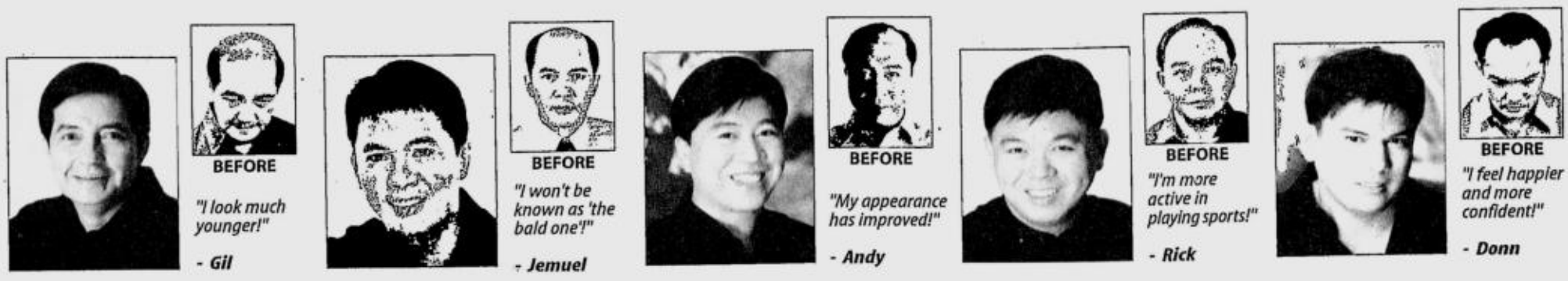

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DANDAN: RP hope

Dandan, 16 other RP netters open Lancer bid

By Musong R. Castillo

KYLE Joshua Dandan, the country's brightest hope in the 16th Mitsubishi Lancer International Juniors tennis championship, slugs it out with countryman Christian Canlas as main draw action unfolds today at the Rizal Memorial hardcourts.

The 16-year-old Dandan, who recently earned an invitation to join the Asian team in the European junior circuit later in the year, is seen as the best homegrown bet for a respectable finish in the tough junior championships.

Twelve Filipinos made it to the boys' singles draw, including Nestor Celestino, Jandrick de Castro, Christian Canlas and Angelo Patrimonio, who all survived qualifying yesterday.

Celestino bundled out the Netherlands' world No. 689 Halvar Dil, 6-3, 3-6, 6-4; Patrimonio downed compatriot Juan Fidel Regis, 7-6 (5), 6-3; and Canlas took out another Filipino in Felix Assad, 6-0, 6-1.

Vivek Shokeen of India, ranked 43rd in the world, is the top seed in the boys' singles.

Shokeen earned a first-round bye like the next 15 seeds in the 128-man main draw, even as only four Filipinas, including two qualifiers, made it to the girls' singles.

Meanwhile, Denise Dy, a 14-year-old Filipina-American, was given a wild card here and will use this event as a tryout for a slot in the RP team to the Southeast Asian Games later in the year.

Anja Peter, born to a Filipino mother and a German father, is also in the main draw and will tangle with Chantal Beetham of Canada in the first round. Dy, ranked 454th in the world, drew American world No. 177 Emmy Fritz-Krockov.

Michelle Pang and Anna Patrimonio are the other Filipinas in the main draw.

Former world No. 1 Lleyton Hewitt and Mark Philippoussis of Australia and Andy Roddick of the United States are some of the names who adorn the history books of this event.

The Philippines will try to win a title here for the first time since 1995, when Maricris Fernandez defeated all comers to win.

Organizers said the event ranks second in Asia only to the Japan Junior Open in terms of the caliber of the field. It is ranked as a Group 1 event.

Harbour Centre dribblers hold strong title promise

By Marc Anthony Reyes

THIS one's a neophyte—with strong title credentials.

With a formidable lineup bannered by aces from La Salle and Ateneo, that's what Harbour Centre is fast shaping up in the PBL Unity Cup which gets going on April 2 at the Makati Coliseum.

Harbour Centre hopes to make a quick impact in the league with La Salle's high-scoring Mac Cardona teaming up with Ateneo backcourt general L.A. Tenorio. Backing them up are Ateneo's Paolo Bugia, La Salle's Jerwin Gaco, Philippine Christian University's Gabby Espinas and National University's Rey Mendoza.

Owners Mikee and Nikki Romero are confident Harbour Centre can make quite an impression in the league.

The Romero brothers are no strangers to winning and they expect their team to be successful as well. Mikee is a former La Salle varsity player who is now a member of the RP trap shooting team while Nikki is a Superbike champion.

READY TO RUMBLE: The Harbour Center squad with team owner Mikee Romero (seated, center), coach Tonichi Yturri (seated third from left), and other team officials during yesterday's team launch at the Kamayan-Padre Faura.

Talented lineup

"We are excited because we want to know how we will fare against old-timers," said Mikee during a team luncheon yesterday. "We have a very talented lineup and we hope that can make up for us being a new team."

Cardona said he's delighted to play alongside Tenorio and other former Ateneo hotshots.

Scoring champion

"Finally I will know how to play with them instead of playing against them," said Cardona, who emerged the scoring champion in the last PBL Open with a 23-point per game average.

Former pro Tonichi Yturri will coach the team, with multi-titled mentor Derrick Pumaren acting as team consultant and alternate board representative. Gil Cortez is the team manager and Dindo Pumaren and Erick Arejola his assistants.

Yturri said his only concern so far is team cohesion because his players have not played together that long. He will be assisted in the bench by Jun Tiongco, Lester del Rosario and Vic Escudero.

Completing the team lineup are former pros Jenkins Mesina and Robert Sanz, Ateneo's Larry Fonacier and Magnum Membrere, Jason Castro, Lou Gatumbato, Jayson Tiongson, Joel Solis, Ronjay Buenafe and Romel Dizon.

SPORTSWATCH

Timbancayas gain last eight

PUERTO PRINCESA CITY—John Timbancaya routed Hadrian Dacuan, 6-1, 6-0, and sister Mallay Timbancaya blasted Aileen Dacuan, 6-3, 6-1, to advance to the quarterfinals of their respective divisions in the 2005 Milo Junior Tennis Cup and Regional Workshop at the Puerto Princesa Tennis Club here Sunday. John gained the last eight in the boys' 14-under, while Malilay reached the next round of the girls' 18-under play with Giga Songco, who ousted Karen Chiu, 6-1, 6-3, in the tournament organized by CTW, supported by adidas and sanctioned by the Philta. In the girls' 16-under event, Linda Santos blanked Cherry Chiu, 6-0, 6-0; Karen Chiu outlasted Malilay, 6-3, 3-6, 7-6; and Songco downed Diana Chiu, 6-4, 6-1.

Sepak takraw ref courses

THE PHILIPPINE Amateur Sepak Takraw Association (Pasta) is inviting physical education (PE) teachers, sports administrators, former athletes and other interested parties to attend the National Referee Accreditation Course to be held on April 20-23 at the PhilSports Arena in Pasig City. Those who will pass the course may attend sepak takraw courses to be held in Puerto Prinsesa City on May 28-31. As their practicum, they will be given the chance to officiate matches during the International Invitational Sepaktakraw Championship-2nd Mayor Hagedorn Cup on June 2-8 at the Puerto Princesa Coliseum. Pasta will select from among the candidates 15 who will officiate games during the 23rd Southeast Asian Games here. For inquiries, call Col. Romarico C. Calderon Sr. at (02) 861-78-00 or 0927-4692614, 0927-4149317.

P2M, Isuzu 4x4 up for grabs

SMALL-TIME cockers and breeders will have a chance to win P2 million and a Big Horn Isuzu 4X4 in the Game Ka Na Ba 5-Cock Derby slated April 30, May 2, 4 and 6 at Roligon Mega Cockpit. "We are expecting about 300 entries for this derby," said Roligon owner Rolly Ligon yesterday. Entry fee is P6,600 and the minimum bet P4,400. The turbo-diesel Isuzu 4X4, now on display at Roligon lobby, will be won by the fastest kill champion. Jeric Junio of Bulacan won a three-door Pajero during the cockpit's Anniversary Derby while Mike Buendia of Batangas drove home a Toyota 4X4 Surf after his prized Sweater Roundhead registered the fastest time of 10.6 seconds during the recent Largahan Derby. For reservation of cockhouses, call 833-2275, 833-1638 and 852-9812.

Sta. Ana 3-cocker Thursday

WITH more than 120 fights scheduled, the Daytime 3-Cock Derby will start promptly at 12 noon on Thursday at Sta. Ana Cockpit on A.P. Reyes Avenue, Makati City. Pit manager Gerald Go has confirmed the participation of more than 80 entries. Participants are required to submit entries tomorrow from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. For inquiries, call 898-3474 and 898-3475. Hosts Kags Paliza and Aba Badiola of Mandaluyong have put up a guaranteed prize of P400,000 for an entry fee of P5,500. Prizes also await the winners in the fastest win category, including P30,000 for the champion; P15,000 for second place; P10,000, third; one 6-cubic-foot refrigerator, fourth; one 21-inch color TV, fifth; one washing machine each, sixth to 10th; and one mountain bike each, 11th to 20th.

Mendoza finishes 3rd in Asian Duathlon

RYAN "Bad Boy" Mendoza proved his worth by finishing a strong third in the elite Open division behind a pair of Uzbekistan bets in the Asian Duathlon Championships held in Nakhom Phanom, Thailand, last Saturday.

Mendoza hung on in the final 5-K run to finish in one hour, 57 minutes and eight seconds.

Uzbeks Ivan Morozov and Artem Milheev finished 1-2 with respective times of 1:54:08 and 1:55:15.

Jefferson Valdez, unable to pace Mendoza in the bike leg as planned due to technical difficulties, settled for sixth place.

In the women's division, Kaye Lopez finished fourth behind champion Megum Shigaki of Japan and runners-up Radka Vodickovr of the Czech Republic and Claire Murray of Hong Kong.

"We are very proud of Mendoza's performance here," said Triathlon Association of the Philippines (Trap) president Tom Carrasco. "He never stopped trying, and considering the strength of the field, it was a very good finish for him. We can expect even better from him in future competitions."

With Carrasco in Thailand were Trap secretary general Mon Marchan and team manager Melvin Fausto.

The other members of the RP team were George Vilog, who competed in the sprint distance, and Patrick Joson.

Sen. Pia Cayetano was supposed to join the team and compete in her age group but failed to make it because of earlier commitments.

Running seventh after the initial 10-K road run, Mendoza was supposed to be paced by Valdez who was right behind him at the Transition 1 finish in the 40-K bike leg to reserve Mendoza's strength for the final 5-K run.

But Valdez experienced technical difficulties, forcing him to slow down.

Mendoza, the country's back-to-back national duathlon champion, still managed to work his way into the front.

What's next for Pacquiao?

SPECTATOR

Al S. Mendoza

NOW that Manny Pacquiao is back, let us talk about what he's done thus far and what he can still do.

We know he's accomplished so much already on the world stage, more than enough to earn him a monument this early in his boxing career.

His recent defeat to Erik Morales in the Sin City that is Las Vegas, well, that's been amply covered by anybody worth his boxing salt so that there's no more point talking about it anymore.

If someone comes along and says Pacquiao lost to Morales because of a swollen finger or toe, have that jerk consigned to an institution. Mask his face with Darlington socks to protect him from the lynch mob.

Got that loud and clear?

Pacquiao has already fought the three greatest Mexican fighters the last three years and his record against them is very good, if not excellent. If I were to rate him on a scale of 1 to 10, I'll give him a 9 against the Mexican troika.

Why, he knocked out Marco Antonio Barrera in 2003. Barrera, before the knockout, was the best pound-for-pound boxer of his time.

In 2004, Pacquiao engaged Juan Miguel Marquez to a controversial split draw after 12 rounds. Controversial because many thought Pacquiao won. That stand was reinforced by a judge's admission that he had erroneously given Pacquiao the wrong score in the first round. Pacquiao floored Marquez three times in the first round and the erring judge gave Pacquiao a 10-7 verdict instead of 10-6, which was the score of the other two judges.

On March 20 this year, Pacquiao lost to Morales by a unanimous decision, with all three judges scoring it 115-113 after 12 rounds. If you can't believe that, something's wrong with your eyes, if not your objectivity.

So, summing it all up, Pacquiao's 1-1-1 record against Barrera, Morales and Marquez was, by all means, something to crow about.

One knockout, one controversy-laden draw, and one defeat on points—why, that could be enough reason to make Pacquiao the next mayor of GenSan.

Name me a non-Mexican boxer who has fought all three and ended up producing a more wondrous result than Pacquiao's. Why, I'll immediately nominate him successor of UN sec-gen Kofi Annan.

At any rate, speculations continue to fly in wild abandon on what the future holds for Pacquiao.

Of the three Mexicans, who will Pacquiao pick to fight next?

Or better yet, among the three, who will make it a perfect fight for Pacquiao?

Anybody will be a perfect choice. Each fight will have its own distinct character-and come-on.

Barrera? He has a score to settle with Pacquiao.

Marquez? There's unfinished, inconclusive if you will, business with Pacquiao.

Morales? There's revenge in the air for Pacquiao, head butt and all.

But it will help a little if we really go Barrera, Marquez and Morales in that order again. A three-fight deal isn't farfetched, considering now that Pacquiao's stock has risen all the more after his courageous stand against Morales.

The hype here could center on retracing the road that Pacquiao had dared to tread on. Where there seemed to be no takers for all three, here was Pacquiao taking on all three, anytime, anywhere.

Promoters will surely not find it difficult sealing another Pacquiao fight with any of the three. Without a doubt, Pacquiao has become as saleable in the Vegas strip as popcorn in a movie theater.

Bottom line is, money—as if you didn't know.

In boxing, the color of money is stronger than any left hook and even mightier than the pen.

With the right price, Pacquiao may be fighting again in six months. Could be less, depending on the figures listed on the dotted line.

Whether it's Barrera first, Marquez or Morales, it doesn't mean a thing.

The purse says it all.

***

FASTBREAK. Here's a glass to Mitsubishi's Mel Dizon for his uninterrupted espousal to put up the Lancer International Junior Tennis Championship, which started yesterday at the Rizal Memorial Tennis Center. To end on April 3, the event is now on its 16th year. Playing as usual are the brightest boys and girls from Australia, Austria, Canada, China, the Czech Republic, France, Germany, Great Britain, Hong Kong, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Kuwait, Malaysia, Mexico, The Netherlands, New Zealand, Russia, Romania, Switzerland, Taipei, Thailand, and United States. Said Froilan Dytianquin, MMPC's Assistant Vice President for Marketing Services: "The annual staging of the Mitsubishi Lancer International Junior Tennis Championship aims to inspire the youth by providing them a venue to bring out their best. We take pride in supporting this sport, which has produced some of the world's best tennis players today like Lleyton Hewitt, Mark Philippoussis, Leander Paes and Andy Roddick, among others."

ALL FOR JUNGOLF

Former President Fidel V. Ramos hits the ceremonial drive yesterday to formally open the Samsung Jungolf Tour at the Aguinaldo Golf Club course. Looking on are Philippine Airlines president Jimmy Bautista, Jungolf president Raoul Lachica, retired general Roberto Santiago, Gerry Handog and the jungolfers participating in the three-day tournament.

Dacor quint whips Marikina in wheelchair caging opener

THE DISABLED Club of Rizal (Dacor) thoroughly outclassed Marikina, 87-19, in the opening game of the seventh Philippine Wheelchair Basketball League yesterday at the Philsports Arena.

Reigning Most Valuable Player Rene Macabenguil led the defending champions with 26 points. Fernando Santos added 21 markers, while Cesar Morgia chipped in 18.

Dacor overwhelmed Marikina early on, jumping to a double-digit lead that grew to 25 points, 36-11, at the half.

The seasoned Dacor players then unloaded a 20-1 bomb for a 56-12 buffer midway in the third period.

Dacor went on to open a 69-point advantage, 85-16, in the fourth quarter.

The top players in the league will form the RP team to the 3rd Asean Para Games that will be held in Manila on Dec. 14-21.

Other participating teams in the four-day tournament are the National Vocational Rehabilitation Center, Tahanang Walang Hagdanan, Quezon City Federation, Baguio, Misamis Occidental and Caloocan. *Jasmine W. Payo*

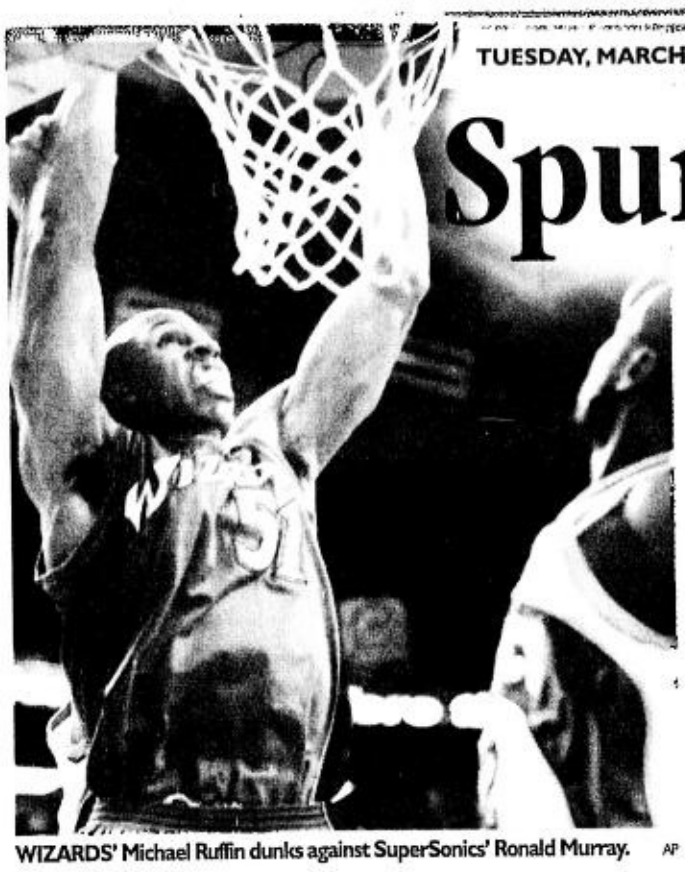
The scores:

DACOR 87— Macabenguil 26, F. Santos 21, Morgia 18, Rabang 6, Banaag 4, Sablo 4, J. Santos 4, Lobos 2, Vilor 2.

MARIKINA 19—Mariano 10, Dela 4, Montoya 2, Salud 2, Dumagas 1, Alferez 0, Saguiona 0, Gigante 0, Palapuz 0.

Quarters: 18-4, 36-11, 66-16, 87-19.

Spurs shoot down Rockets


WIZARDS' Michael Ruffin dunks against SuperSonics' Ronald Murray. AP

TORONTO—Manu Ginobili collected 18 points and Brent Barry added 17 to push the San Antonio Spurs to an 83-70 victory over cross-state rivals the Houston Rockets Sunday.

Barry picked up a trio of three-pointers in a 21-2 fourth-quarter run for the host Spurs, who were again minus Tim Duncan. San Antonio is 3-5 this season without its leading scorer.

The Spurs had six players scoring in double-digits as they held the Rockets to their lowest points total of the campaign.

Robert Horry posted 12 points for San Antonio while Tony Parker registered 11 points, eight rebounds and six assists and Bruce Bowen had 11 points.

The Rockets lost for the 15th straight time at San Antonio, despite overcoming a 12-point first-half deficit to lead by five with 10:31 left in the game.

Tracy McGrady claimed 26 points and Yao Ming 18 for the Rockets, who were outscored 28-14 in the final session.

In Minneapolis, Kevin Garnett scored 20 points, including 13 in the fourth quarter, to lead the Minnesota Timberwolves past the Los Angeles Clippers, 89-85.

Sam Cassell added 16 points off the bench for the T-Wolves, who won their fourth outing in a row to move within 2 1/2 games of Denver for the final playoff spot in the Western Conference.

COMPLETE RESULTS: San Antonio 83, Houston 70; Minnesota 89, LA Clippers 85; Philadelphia 96, LA Lakers 89; Washington 95, Seattle 94.

Yao Model Worker candidate

SHANGHAI, China—Houston Rockets center Yao Ming is known as one of the hardest working men in basketball.

Now his hometown of Shanghai wants to make the title official by nominating him for Model Worker honors, the Shanghai Daily reported on Monday. *AP*

Spartans in Final 4

TORONTO—Shannon Brown scored 24 points and Maurice Ager added 21 as the Michigan State Spartans edged the Kentucky Wildcats, 94-88, after double overtime in the Austin Region final of the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Tournament Sunday.

In the Syracuse Region, Sean May had 29 points and 12 rebounds to lead the top-seeded North Carolina Tar Heels to an 88-82 victory over the sixth-seeded Wisconsin Badgers.

Second-seeded Kentucky (28-6) tied its game with a controversial three-pointer at the buzzer in regulation time before missing a chance to win the game by failing to get a shot off in the dying seconds of the first overtime with the score, 81-81. *Reuters*

Annika by 8; Dorothy bags ₱1.9 million

RANCHO MIRAGE, California—Sweden's Annika Sorenstam made an overpowering start to her Grand Slam bid here Sunday, winning the LPGA Kraft Nabisco Championship by eight strokes for her eighth major title.

Serving notice that she has the skill to achieve her goal of a "Soren-Slam" this season, Sorenstam achieved her largest victory margin in a major and matched an LPGA record with her fifth consecutive triumph.

"I just had one of those great weeks where everything went my way," she said. "I'm getting better and better at every part of the game, and it's all coming together.

"I felt good. I felt calm. Hit some good shots. Got some good bounces. I've been driving down the street and it has been green lights. Good music on the radio. You name it. Everything has been perfect.

Sorenstam fired a four-under par 68 final round at the $1.8 million event to finish 72 holes on 15-under par 273, winning here for the third time and leaving American runner-up Rosie Jones in awe.

Fil-Am Dorothy Delasin closed with a 71 and wound up in a five-way tie for ninth at 1-under par 287 following earlier rounds of 71-72-73. She bagged $34,591 (about P1.87M).

Filipina Jennifer Rosales also carded a 71 and finished at 295, good for a four-way tie for 35th and $12,383 (P.66M). *AFP*

Storm stops Players meet

PONTE VEDRA BEACH, Florida—Storms halted play for the third day in a row here Sunday at the Players Championship, raising the chances for a Tuesday finish at a US PGA event that seems as if it might never end.

England's Luke Donald and American Joe Durant shared the lead early in the third round Sunday when downpours left the already saturated TPC at Sawgrass course unplayable for the remainder of the day.

The event will be forced into a Monday for the third time in six years and could become the first US PGA tournament in a quarter century—since the 1980 Tucson Open—to finish on a Tuesday in order to play a full 72 holes.

Both leaders managed a birdie in three holes before the storm began, leaving them on 11-under par, one stroke ahead of defending champion Adam Scott of Australia, England's Lee Westwood and Americans Zach Johnson and Tim Herron. *AFP*

Safin bows out

KEY BISCAYNE, Florida—Marat Safin threw, kicked and cursed his racket but couldn't make it behave, and he lost 7-6 (6), 6-1 to Dominik Hrbaty in the third round of the Nasdaq-100 Open on Sunday.

The combustible Safin, ranked fourth, became progressively more discouraged as his match progressed, and he made no effort to reach the Slovakian's final shot, an ace down the middle. *AFP*

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Race 3—1. Player's Twist 2. Friendly Lover 3. No Compromise 4. Beatitudes
Race 4—1. Legally Blonde 2. Native Prince 3. Tervalac/King Asa
Race 5—1. Silver Cho Cho 2. Pulilan Beauty 3. Quant Je Puis 4. Hezabellagio
Race 6—1. Pasirit 2. Maraya's Fantasy 3. Dalia 4. Scream for Chance
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'Kamao' needs more punch and focus

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synopsis:
"Boso", shot on a digital video, is a sexy dark comedy about Jake, caretaker of a boarding house by day and a peeping-Tom by night. In a place filled with twisted characters and absurd lives, he oversees each tenant's secrets, daily routines and private world.
Jake continues "playing God" until he meets and falls for Cecilia, a woman who makes him realize the essence of beauty - unseen by the eyes. Later, a tragic accident leads to an unexpected twist and dramatic confrontation.

APRIL 13-19

MTRCB Rating: R-18
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WE CAUGHT the first telecast of "Kamao" on Channel 2 last week, and found the sports "reality challenge" show an occasionally interesting but more often confounding viewing experience.

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

On the positive side, the young boxers competing for the competition's top prize were generally eager, well-trained and intensely focused on winning. Some of the challenges that tested their physical agility and resolve were similarly engaging.

The telecast's finale was exciting, with the two boxers who had the lowest scores in the preceding challenges fighting each other with great strength and heart.

On the other hand, some of the challenges distracted from the show's basic pugilistic intent, because they were so far removed from boxing and the skills it requires.

The hosts were also a problem. **Robin Padilla's** mega-tough guy stance and voice were too over-the-top, and sometimes unintentionally turned the program into a sports-comedy show.

And what was **Vina Morales** doing in that first telecast for her to merit her co-host billing? All she did was react to the boxing bout that ended the show, and her reactions were rather clueless and not very helpful to viewers who wanted to know what was going on.

The show also misjudged its young contestants' ability to make the proceedings more personal by sharing their thoughts on what winning meant to them and to their generally needy families.

It turned out that quite a number of them were rather inarticulate, so all they could contribute were standard solo stories that ended up sounding generic rather than truly personal.

We trust that the production will get its act together in subsequent telecasts. And that it can eventually distance itself in style and content from US TV's "The Contender," from which some observers believe it's been derived.

Shockers from the stars

MOVIE luminaries generally keep their honest emotions rigorously in check, but some of them occasionally drop their guard, and treat us to unusually candid statements and shockers, which tell us a lot about how they really feel. Some stellar revelations:

Sean Connery: It's very difficult to measure trust.

You either trust somebody or you don't. Sadly, I've mistakenly trusted and been screwed more times than a hooker.

Jodie Foster: I never needed to be famous. I still don't. It's annoying. It's the last thing that I looked for.

Hugh Grant: Acting has destroyed my ego.

I have very little self-respect now. I don't particularly admire actors, so to be one is something I'm not particularly proud of.

Keanu Reeves: I don't want to be superfamous, man. That would be awful.

Jerry Seinfeld: Some people like me, some don't, many don't care. But I think, for every person who loves me, there's one that can't stand me.

Tim Roth: The first time I went out on stage, I was so scared that I wet myself, literally pissed on myself.

(More shockers tomorrow)

Jodi 'not pregnant just...

From page A30

Lapid, Luisa Ejercito and Ramon Revilla Jr.

Other sponsors were Estrella Dimaculangan, Carlos Chan, Berna Lomotan, Antonio Chua Jr., Glo Uy, Sebastian Chua, Ging Marcelo, Julius Espina, Betsy Quisimbing, Mariano Nocom Sr., Bernardita Espina, Oscar Parel, Theresa Santiago, Jerson Samson, Lenie Valerio, George Ty and Erlina Samson.

Pampi's eldest brother, Ronald Jay, was his best man, and sister-in-law Genarie was matron of honor.

Jodi co-hosted the recently concluded talent-search program "Star Circle Quest" with Luis Manzano.

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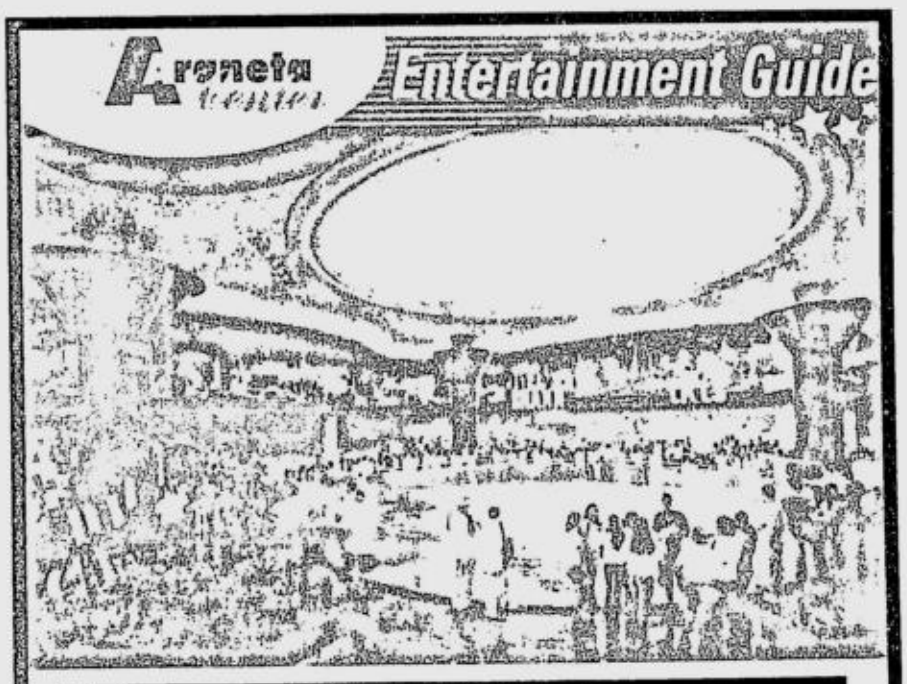

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She can see clearly now

THE GRADUATE: "To help my family, I had to help myself."

By Jocelyn Valle
Contributor

KLAUDIA Koronel, former sexy star, finally knows where she's at.

On April 4, when she joins the graduation march at the Iglesia ni Cristo's New Era University in Quezon City (having finished a computer course) it would be like marching toward a clear-cut future.

She will next take a graduate course, the better to manage a business that she co-owns with her Malaysian boyfriend, and maybe go back to the movies as a serious actress with a brand-new screen personality.

These plans she announced during a recent meeting with media, a press con that briefly strayed to current events of another kind in Klaudia's life.

Her brother, an inmate at the Camp Bagong Diwa prison, had survived the March 15 standoff that claimed at least 23 lives. She would not say how long this brother had been serving time and for what offense. But she did offer some explanation as to why he was predisposed to such a life because, she admitted, she had been there.

"I craved happiness that my family could not provide," she said. "I ran away from problems and turned to drinking and smoking."

She later told INQUIRER Entertainment: "I did everything I could. Being good or bad is up to the person."

The road back

She should know. Klaudia made such a choice five years ago when she decided to go back to school.

"I passed the entrance exam in other schools but they turned me down because I was doing bold movies," revealed the sex siren who was noticed by critics in films like "Tuhog" by Jeffrey Jeturian and Jose Javier Reyes' "Live Show."

"Just when I was feeling discouraged, New Era popped into my head," she said. "I've been a member of the Iglesia ni Cristo since I was 10 years old but I went astray. The first few weeks in school, I noticed that some students didn't like me around."

Choosing to enroll in the conservative institution turned out to be a wise decision. "They are strict only so they can guide the students. It's great to be counseled with lines from the Bible."

Even so, she had a hard time balancing career and studies, especially in her freshman year. Fatigue took its toll on her health, and she had to go to hospital for treatment. That was when she decided to concentrate on her studies to the exclusion of everything else—and to the chagrin of her family.

Klaudia, real name Milfe Daculla, is the eldest of five kids. She had taken on bold roles in the movies, she said, to support her mother and siblings.

She recounted: "They understood why I went back to school, but not why I had to quit show business. They continued to come to me for help but I had nothing to give. I had to let them solve their own problems because by that time I knew that in order for me to help them, I had to help myself first."

Today, five years since she made the turnaround, Klaudia is about to see the fruit of her labor. The commencement exercises will be held at the school's Tabernacle Temple Central.

A word in edgewise

She had quite a mouthful to say to both parents and students: "Parents should strive to give their children good education, and children should take none of this for granted. Most of my classmates received allowances from their parents; I had only myself to rely on. I envied them at times."

Klaudia encouraged her fellow actors to go back to school. "A few units at a time would do. It's hard but it's all worth it," she said.

At present, she runs an Internet café with her boyfriend. She said she planned to take up additional training in information technology in his country although, thankfully for her fans, show biz doesn't seem to be a thing of the past altogether. She even has a new manager now—Angge, a talent coordinator of ABS-CBN programs.

A family of her own is part of her plans, too. But, she said, not in the immediate future. She didn't mind explaining this point at all: "When I finally have kids I will make sure that they don't experience what I went through."

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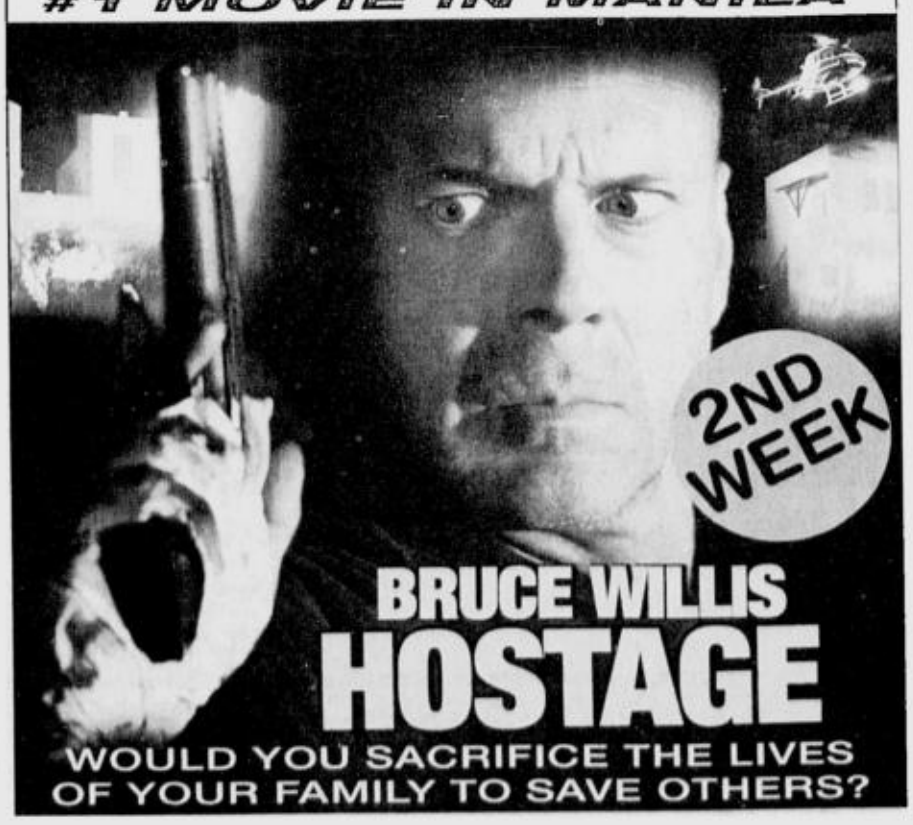

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7 SHAOLIN vs EVIL DEAD
8 CURSED

sm city dasmariñas
1 ROBOTS
2 BAHAY NI LOLA 2
3 SHIRI smcinemaexclusive
4 MILLION DOLLAR BABY

sm city marilao
1 CURSED
2 SHIRI smcinemaexclusive
3 BAHAY NI LOLA 2
4 SON OF THE MASK

sm city lucena
1 PHANTOM OF THE OPERA
2 SON OF THE MASK 2
3 BAHAY NI LOLA 2
4 CONSTANTINE

VISAYAS AND MINDANAO

sm city cebu
1 PHANTOM OF THE OPERA
2 ROBOTS
3 RESERVED
4 RESERVED
5 RAY
6 BAHAY NI LOLA 2
7 HOSTAGE
8 HITCH

sm city iloilo
1 BIRHEN NG MANAOAG
2 RESERVED
3 SON OF THE MASK 2
4 MILLION DOLLAR BABY
5 THE AVIATOR
6 ROBOTS
7 RESERVED
8 HOSTAGE

sm city davao
1 ROBOTS
2 ASSAULT ON PRECINCT 13
3 SON OF THE MASK 2
4 LEMONY SNICKET'S A SERIES OF UNFORTUNATE EVENTS
5 PHANTOM OF THE OPERA
6 HITCH

sm city cagayan de oro
1 THE AVIATOR
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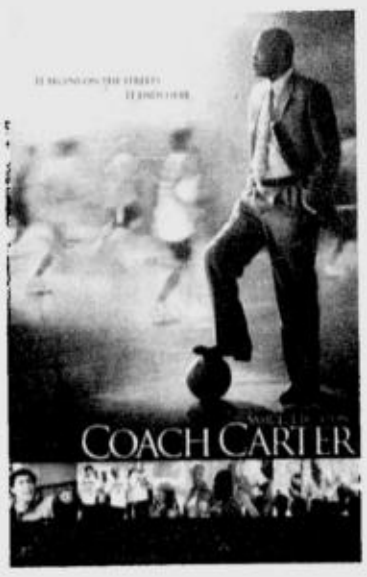

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4 CONSATANTINE	8 BAHAY NI LOLA 2

NOVALICHES — 935-3229/31

1 ROBOTS	5 BAHAY NI LOLA 2
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4 MS. CONGENIALITY 2	8 RESERVE

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4 BUKID AY BASA 2	4 SON OF THE MASK 2
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5 MILLION DOLLAR BABY	

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6 SHAOLIN VS. EVIL DEAD	6 ROBOTS

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4 THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST	4 SON OF THE MASK 2
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THX

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G4 GLORIETTA 4	1 ROBOTS	2 ALONE IN THE DARK	THX MS. CONGENIALITY 2 12:30, 3:00, 5:30, 8:00, 10:30 GUARANTEED SEATS	
	4 SPANGLISH	5 HITCH	6 MISS CONGENIALITY 2	7 COACH CARTER
G1 GLORIETTA 1	1 ROBOTS		2 MISS CONGENIALITY 2	
	3 ALONE IN THE DARK		4 HOSTAGE	
ATC ALABANG TOWN CENTER	THX 1 MISS CONGENIALITY 2	2 ALONE IN THE DARK	3 ROBOTS	
	4 HOSTAGE		5 HITCH	
ACC ALABANG TOWN CENTER	1 RAY	2 HITCH	3 ROBOTS	
	4 THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA		5 CLOSED	
GB1 GREENBELT 1	1 ROBOTS 11:30, 1:30, 3:30, 5:30, 7:30, 9:30			
	2 MISS CONGENIALITY 2 11:05, 1:40, 4:15, 6:50, 9:25			
GB3 GREENBELT 1	THX 1 MISS CONGENIALITY 2 1:05, 3:40, 6:15, 8:50, 11:25 GUARANTEED SEATS	THX 2 MISS CONGENIALITY 2 12:30, 3:05 GUARANTEED SEATS	3 COACH CARTER 12:50, 3:30, 6:10, 8:50, 11:30 GUARANTEED SEATS	
	4 SPANGLISH 1:30, 4:00, 6:30, 9:00, 11:30 GUARANTEED SEATS		5 ROBOTS 2:30, 4:30, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30 GUARANTEED SEATS	

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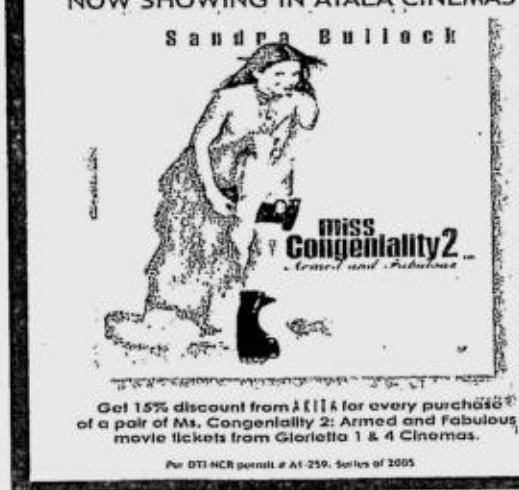

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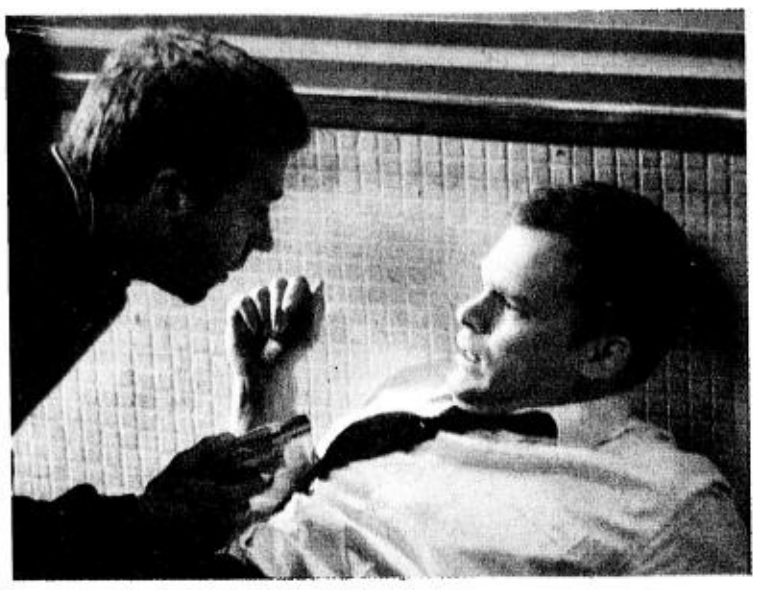
The peculiar Fishers back tonight


MICHAEL C. Hall (right) as David Fisher

LIFE looks pretty okay.

Newly married Ruth Fisher (Frances Conroy) and George (James Cromwell) are deliriously honeymooning. David (Michael C. Hall) and Keith (Mathew St. Patrick) have decided to stick together. Even the antisocial Claire (Lauren Ambrose) seems to have found her footing.

But Nate (Peter Krause) has begun a dangerous spiral into depression after the death of his wife, Lisa, and Rico (Freddy Rodriguez) grapples with marital problems, having hooked up with a stripper.

They're back in the fourth season of HBO's "Six Feet Under," starting tonight, 10 p.m., on HBO.

Using dramatic irony and dark, situational humor, the series approaches the subject of death through the eyes of the Fisher family, owners/operators of Fisher & Diaz Funeral Home in Los Angeles, California. The storylines spilling out of this home are so fraught with emotional baggage that it's hard to imagine the show getting any more intense. But it does, even as its core characters grow and new ones come on board.

Not pretty

Says actress Rachel Griffiths, who portrays Brenda, Nate's genius girlfriend: "The first two seasons were about establishing the family. Last year we radiated out to the immediate relationships. This season we get into the individual characters as they exist outside the family—and let me tell you, it's not always pretty."

Having some of the juiciest, most complex woman roles ever on television, "Six Feet Under" revolves around the female characters this season. Ruth explores her feminine wiles and profound anxieties; Claire slowly learns to love herself through her art; Brenda gives her heart to a new man and a new career; and Vanessa Diaz, Rico's wife, finds strength and independence when her marriage shakes.

A new episode follows every Tuesday night; repeats on Saturday night.

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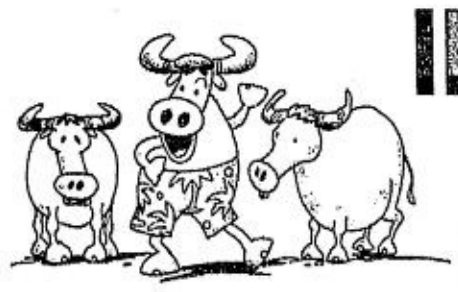
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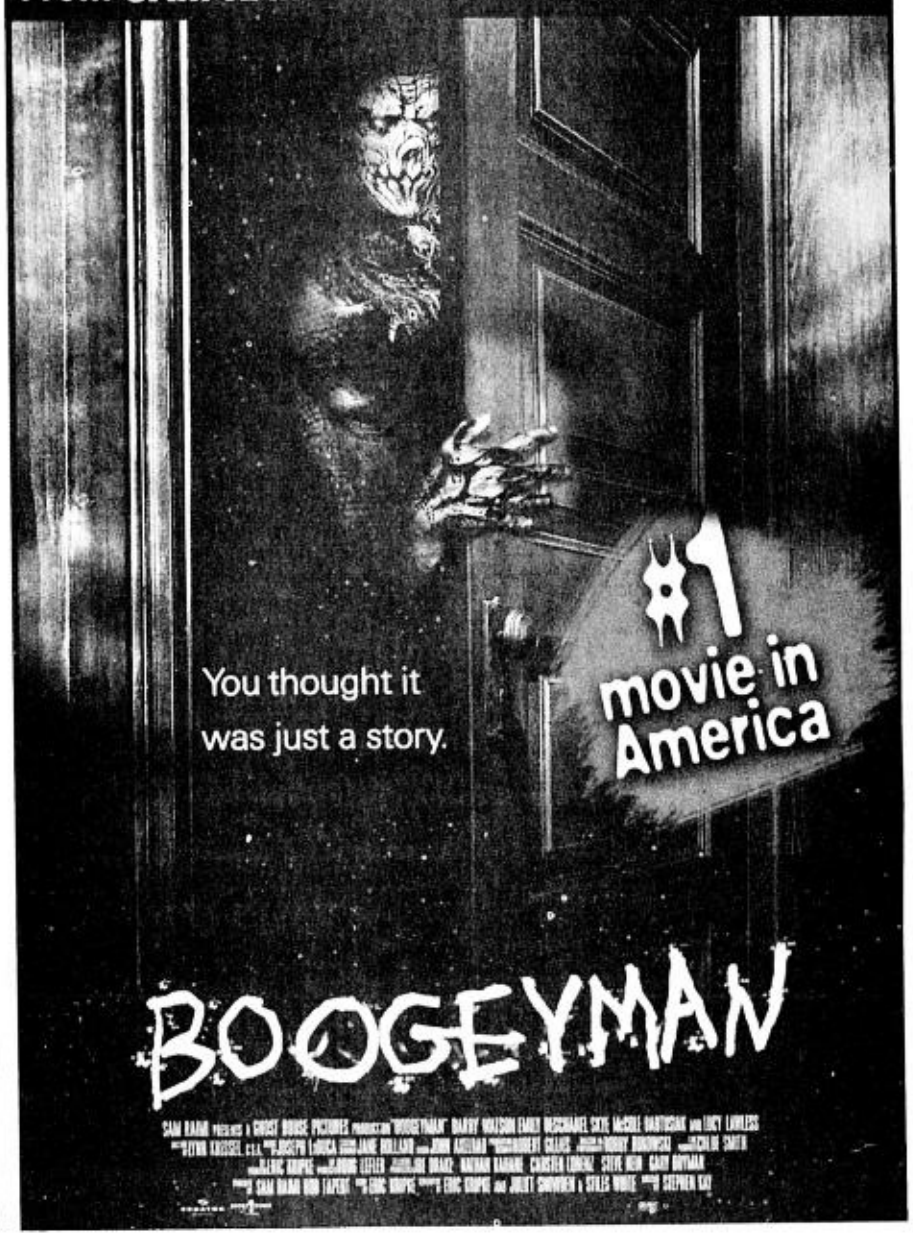

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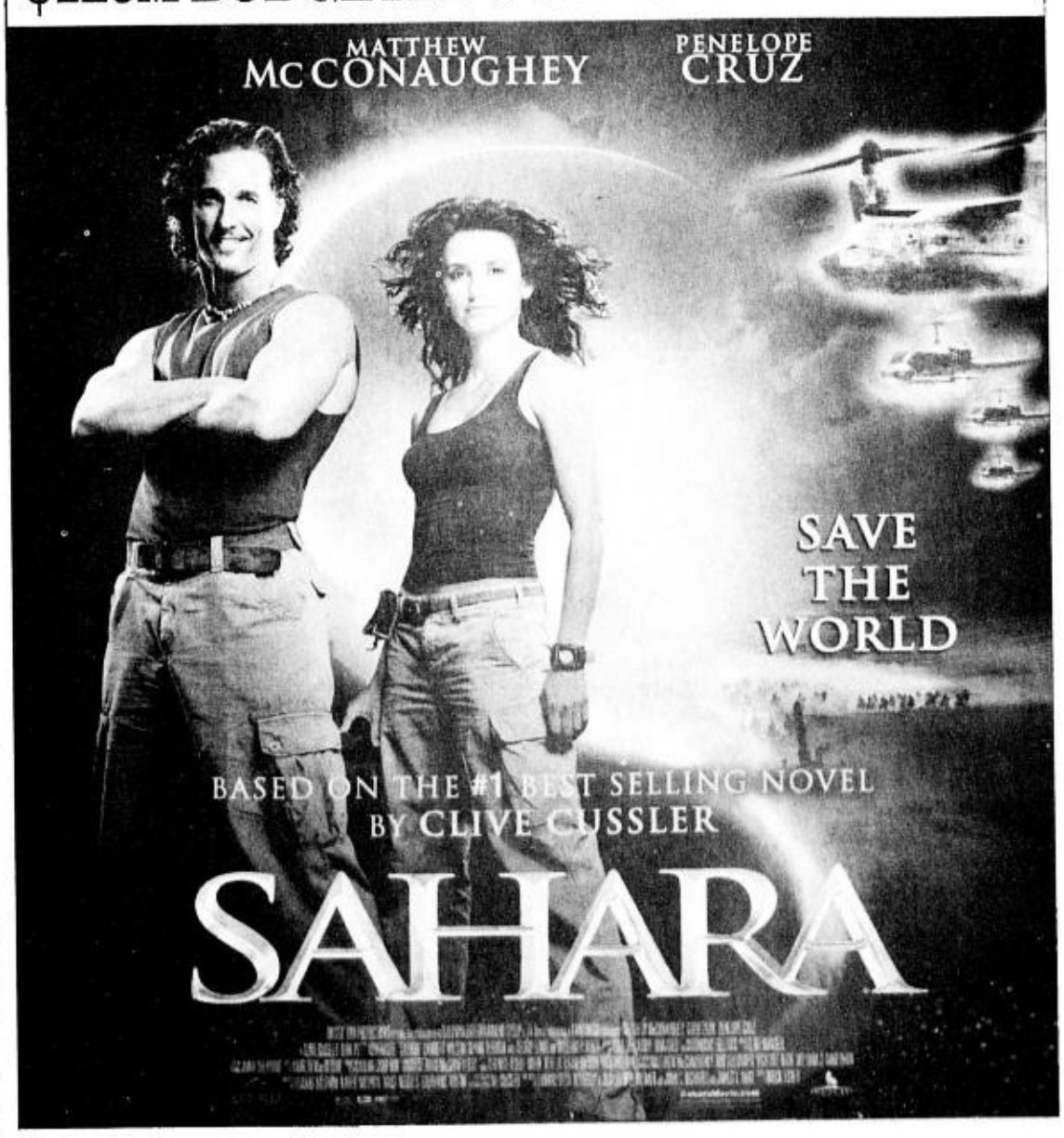

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MMFF 2005: Here's how to do it

By Bayani San Diego Jr.
Contributor

THE METRO Manila Film Festival 2005 was launched on March 11 during a program at the Manila Hotel. Producer Lily Monteverde lambasted Bayani Fernando, Metro Manila Development Authority chair, for scaling down last year the government subsidy for each entry, from P1 million to P300,000.

Fernando's retort: Not all the stars were present during the parade. Talk about less than auspicious starts.

Almost everyone in the industry has his two cents' worth on how the annual MMFF can be improved. We think the opinions that matter most at this point are those of the filmmakers who are thinking of competing in the December fest.

We asked 1) award-winners from the 1970s, a.k.a. the Second Golden Age of Philippine Cinema, who have made waves internationally ("Mga Munting Tinig," "Sibak"); 2) acclaimed young filmmakers who've made a name for themselves with MMFF hits ("Crying Ladies," "Bridal Shower"); 3) debuting makers of cutting-edge works ("Masahista," "Mga Pusang Gala"); and 4) upcoming directors from the digital frontlines ("Sarong Banggi," "Salamin").

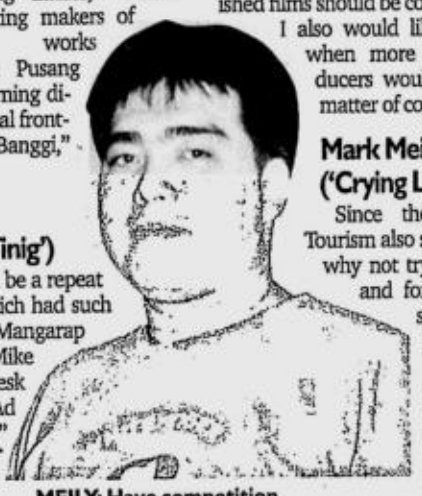
Gil Portes ('Mga Munting Tinig')

I wish there could be a repeat of the 1977 fest, which had such entries as: "Kung Mangarap Ka't Magising" by Mike de Leon, "Burlesk Queen" by Celso Ad Castillo, and "Inay" by Lino Brocka, among others. The year before that, we had "Ganito Kami Noon, Paano Kayo Ngayon" by Eddie Romero, "Insiang" by Lino Brocka, and "Minsa'y Isang Gamugamo" by Lupita Aquino. Back then, entries were chosen not for commercial appeal but for critical merit.

Politics cannot be avoided altogether, but it could be minimized if: (1) we judge finished films and not scripts; this is a filmfest, not a scriptwriting contest; (2) if we will stick to rules, especially deadlines; (3) if big stars were not [an unspoken] requisite for entries.

Ideally, a director should not have more than one entry. And we should encourage more independent productions.

The MMFF criteria clearly state that it is a search for films with global appeal. But in the last five years, only one Best Picture winner in the fest has earned international acclaim—"Crying Ladies."



MEILY: Have competition and non-competition categories.

Mel Chionglo ('Sibak')

The MMFF that I remember is 1977's, for the mixture of serious and commercial movies by the country's top directors—10 different films produced by 10 different companies and directed by 10 different filmmakers. That's the ideal. The festival committee should welcome not only commercially viable movies, but also quality movies with commercial promise. Only finished films should be considered as entries.

I also would like to see the day when more independent producers would be joining as a matter of course.

Mark Meily ('Crying Ladies')

Since the Department of Tourism also sponsors the MMFF, why not try to attract tourists and foreigners by having subtitles for the films?

There should be competition and non-competition categories—competition for serious films, non-competition for the commercial films.

ONGKEKO-MARFIL JETURIAN

Give the exact government subsidy to the producer whether or not the cast is complete during the parade. The films, not the floats, make the festival.

Limit the politicians joining the parade.

Ban sequels, so all the films are originals.

The meaning of the Gender Sensitive Award should be explained to the public. Also, the difference between Best Story and Best Screenplay.

Majority of the jury members should be people actively working in the industry. No one should have to explain to some government official the technical merits of a film.

Films graded A or B by the Cinema Evaluation Board should receive the mandated rebate.

And bring back the short film section.

Jeffrey Jeturian ('Bridal Shower')

Number one on my wish list is change of management. The MMFF shouldn't be run by mayors and people who are controlled by the producers.

Year in and year out, the rules are violated, or changed. I cannot blame (independent filmmaker) Lav Diaz for dismissing the MMFF as a "festival of idiots." He saw it first-hand. When his film "Batang West Side" was screened, some members of the selection committee didn't bother to watch it in full. They kept stepping out for snacks.

Dante Mendoza ('Masahista')

The MMFF should really be Pinoy in context, in spirit, in terms of stories.

It should showcase the Filipino as a whole. Otherwise, we should stop calling it a Filipino festival.

It shouldn't be just a fund-raising project. If they want a lot of family-oriented movies, they should come up with a separate festival for children.

I wish more independent movies could join.

Ellen Ongkeko-Marfil ('Mga Pusang Gala')

When you say film festival, it should really feature the cream of the crop, movies that will set trends, birth new ideas. When our films go abroad, they serve as ambassadors of goodwill. I just hope the people behind the MMFF realize this.

There should be more to the MMFF than coming up with money earners.

Emmanuel dela Cruz ('Sarong Banggi')

I grew up watching MMFF films. But when I became a film student and joined the industry, my mind was opened.

I guess everyone wants the MMFF to showcase the best of Filipino films. This is not to discount the popular genres, but every year, there's a fiasco about the choice of entries. I personally feel there should be a balance.

We should open up the MMFF to independent movies, not just mainstream productions. We should also open it up in terms of medium. Hopefully, there will be a digital section—if not on the competition level, then even just for exhibition.

Welcoming films from other regions and in other dialects (like "Panaghoy sa Suba") is also healthy.

I hope that beyond politics and show biz, the festival will also have a cultural perspective.

Benjamin Padero ('Salamin')

The MMFF should be as varied, as original, and as groundbreaking as film festivals abroad. At present, it is limited to films with box-office potential.

We might change things by putting new filmmakers in the organizing committee, so we could get different viewpoints and break old habits.

PAMPI Jr. with famous dad

Jodi 'not pregnant, just in love'

By Marinel R. Cruz

FLASH!

YOUNG actress Jodi Sta. Maria married the son of Sen. Panfilo Lacson in Las Vegas last Easter Sunday, not because she was pregnant but "for the simple reason that they are very much in love with each other." Thus ABS-CBN confirmed in an official statement the news that Sta. Maria, an exclusive ward of the network's talent center, Star Magic, and Panfilo "Pampi" Lacson Jr., 21, were wed at the chapel of the posh Mandalay Bay hotel on March 27.

JODI STA. MARIA

"Jodi informed her ABS-CBN bosses of her wedding," said the statement.

A show biz insider said it was the wish of Sta. Maria's mother, Mercedita, who is seriously ill, to see her daughter settle down.

Star Magic was still trying to contact Jodi as of presstime, PR Head Rikka Dylim told INQUIRER yesterday.

Among the principal sponsors were the elder Lacson's colleagues Sen. Lito

JODI/ A26

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

TV GUIDE

Tuesday, March 29, 2005

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ABS-CBN 2	Kapamilya Cinema				Showbiz No. 1 (4:25 PM)	Gotcha Keepers (5:10 PM)	Gundam Seed (5:35 PM)	The Road To Stardom	TV Patrol		Spirits	Krystala	Hiram	Save The Last Dance	Til Death Do Us Part	Bora			Insider
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GMA 7		Saang Sulok Ng Langit	Joyride	Glass Shoes	One Piece	Knock Out	Trylor Hungry Heart	24 Oras		Extra Challenge		Mulawin		Full House	Stairway To Heaven	Bahay Mo Ba 'To?			Saksi
RPN 9	Metro TV Shopping			Hoy Arnold!	As Told By Ginger	Wild Thornberries	Sponge Bob	Entertainment Tonight	8 Simple Rules	Makukim In The Middle	NBA On RPN					Newswatch Now	David Blaine		
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Lifestyle Network	Secret Gardens	The Fid	Mission Organization	Carol Duvall	Moko Mafo	Hot Off The Grit	Good Eats	Extreme Cuisine	Unwrapped	Passion For Dessert						Six Feet Under New Season Premiere			The Devil's Own (11:40PM)
HBO			Soapdish (3:25PM)			Dr. Jekyll And Mr. Hyde			Undercover Brother (6:40 PM)			How To Lose A Guy In 10 Days (8:05 PM)							
Star Movies			Blind Horizon			Green Card (5:15 PM)		Me, Myself and Irene (7:05 PM)				Alex & Emma			A Walk in the Clouds (10:35PM)				
Cartoon Network	Scooby-Doo Show	The All New Popeye Show		Tom & Jerry Show	The Woody Woodpecker Show	Sylvester & Tweety Mysteries	Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles	X-Men Evolution	Static Shock	Gundam Wing	Shaman King	The Looney Tunes Show		The Powerpuff Girls	Dexter's Laboratory	Mr. T	Josie And The Pussycats	The Superfriends	Gundam Seed
ESPN		Pool/Snooker Mosconi Cup '04		World Tenpin Bowling Masters 2004		World Tenpin Bowling Masters 2004	LPGA Golf CA USA				Sportscenter Asia	World Pool Masters '04		2004 BCA Open 9-BAll Sfinals		2004 BCA OPen 9-BAll Sfinals		Sportscenter Asia	
Disney Channel	Mr Bean: The Animated Series	Totally Spies	The Sleepover Club	Art Attack	That's So Raven	Martin Mystery	Totally Spies	Kim Possible	Mr Bean: The Animated Series	Lilo & Stitch	Stitch The Movie			My Wife And Kids	That's So Raven	America's Funniest Home Video	According To Jim	The Amazing Zorro	
Cinemax	Framed			The Naked Jungle			Dead Heat (5:45 PM)				Hostile Waters (7:20 PM)	Just Cause		The Assignment				Countdown (10:55PM)	
Hallmark Channel	Mad About You	Just Cause		Hans Christian Andersen	Sesame Street	Play With Me Sesame	Mad About You	Who's The Boss	Bewitched	Judging Amy				Just Desserts			Missing (10:35PM)		Judging Amy (11:25PM)
Discovery Channel		Civilisations				Wild Science		Ultimate Discovery		Rides		Human Discovery		Wild Discovery		Ultimate Discovery		Science Mysteries	
Sports Plus		World Golf Accenture Match									NCAA Reg Finals Game1				Italia Serie A				Bikini Destruction
EWTN	Pope John Paul's Legacy To The Family	Angelus (3:15PM)	Mysteries Of The Rosary	My Little Angels	Angel Force	The Holy Rosary With Mother Angelica	Fr. Groeschel	Catholic Morality & The Catechism	EWTN Gallery	The Journey Home		Does The Church Still Teach That	Lord, Have Mercy	Daily Mass		Angelus (10:15PM)		Web Of Faith	
SBN 21		Morph TV		Oras Ng Himala		SBN Sing Along		Powerline	Gospel Of The Kingdom			Give Us This Day		Behold		The Kingdom Of Jesus Christ		Evening Devotions	

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Gov't rejects all bids for T-bills

By Michelle V. Remo

THE GOVERNMENT rejected bids for all short-term government securities yesterday in a move to prevent interest rates from rising as banks sought higher yields.

Had the Bureau of Treasury accepted the bids, the rate for the benchmark 91-day treasury bill could have risen by as much as 38.7 basis points to 6.926 percent from only 6.539 percent two weeks ago.

The rates for the 182- and 364-day bills could have likewise risen to 8.113 percent and 8.973 percent, respectively, had the Treasury accepted the bids for the two tenors. During the last auction two weeks ago, the 182- and 364-day paper fetched rates of only 7.59 percent and 8.147 percent, respectively.

National Treasurer Omar Cruz said banks tried to push interest rates upward, thinking that the Bankgo Sentral ng Pilipinas would raise its policy rates. They speculated that the BSP would raise its rates after the US Federal Reserve increased its policy rates by another 25 basis points last week to 2.75 percent.

"That's a wrong guess. The market could have misinterpreted the Bankgo Sentral statement [on the US Fed rate hike]," Cruz said in a press briefing after the auction. He noted that the central bank kept on saying that inflation remained supply-side driven and that there was still no need to raise its policy rates despite the US Fed action.

The Treasury rejected P8.599 billion worth of bids for the 91-, 182- and 364-day treasury bills.

All tenors were under-subscribed. Tenders for the 91-day bills reached only P3.41 billion compared with the government's offering of P4.5 billion, while bids for the 182-day debt instrument only stood at 2.87 billion compared to the P4 billion that was offered. The 364-day bills generated only P2.32 worth of bids, compared with the government's offering of P3.5 billion.

Cruz said the government could afford to reject the bids since its cash position remained healthy. He said the government still had enough liquidity, considering that it raised $1.5 billion from the offshore bond market early this year.

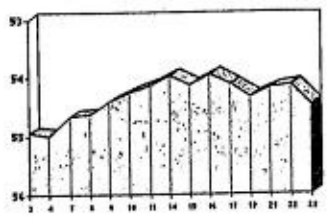
He said the government would not allow interest rates to go up at this time, believing that there was no reason at the moment for banks to ask for high yields. He said that the expected increase in the policy rates of the BSP was baseless, stressing that just because the US Fed raised its policy rate did not mean the BSP had to do the same.

The BSP's policy rates remain at 6.75 percent for overnight borrowing and 9 percent for overnight lending. These rates have been unchanged since July 2003.

INDICATORS

CURRENCIES

PESO-DOLLAR RATE



₱54.48 = $1
As of 5 p.m., March 28, 2005

¥106.94 = $1
As of 5 p.m., March 28, 2005

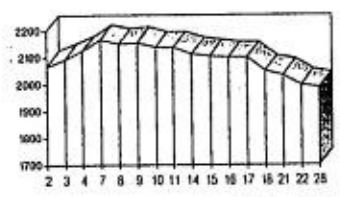
GOLD: $430.70-431.20
per ounce Hong Kong, March 22, 2005

United States	Dollar	0.771486	1.000000	54.1890
Japan	Yen	0.007254	0.009403	0.5095
United Kingdom	Pound	1.442756	1.870100	101.3388
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.098915	0.128213	6.9477
Switzerland	Franc	0.643066	0.833542	45.1688
Canada	Dollar	0.633404	0.821018	44.4901
Singapore	Dollar	0.469417	0.608458	32.9717
Australia	Dollar	0.595144	0.771426	41.8028
Bahrain	Dinar*	2.046491	2.652661	143.7450
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.205724	0.266660	14.4500
Brunei	Dollar	0.467993	0.606612	32.8717
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000082	0.000106	0.0057
Thailand	Baht	0.019797	0.025661	1.3905
UAE	Dirham	0.210054	0.272272	14.7541
Euro	Euro	1.000000	1.296200	70.2398
Argentina	Peso	0.264888	0.343348	18.6057
Brazil	Real	0.281924	0.365430	19.8023
Denmark	Kroner	0.134269	0.174040	9.4311
India	Rupee	0.017686	0.022925	1.2423
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.203050	0.263193	14.2622
Mexico	New Peso	0.068462	0.088741	4.8088
New Zealand	Dollar	0.549687	0.712504	38.6099
South Africa	Rand	0.124534	0.161421	8.7472
Korea	Won	0.000761	0.000986	0.0534
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.024528	0.031793	1.7228

STOCK MARKET

Stocks down 0.61%

PSE COMPOSITE INDEX



SHARE prices closed 0.61 percent lower yesterday with investors keeping to the sidelines after a five-day Easter weekend holiday and in the absence of fresh leads, dealers said.

They said select blue chips led by Ayala Land drew bargain-hunting interest and helped limit the market's losses.

STOCKS/ B4

RP telcos get favorable court ruling in Hawaii

By Clarissa S. Batino

PHILIPPINE telecom firms have won another favorable decision last week from the District Court of Hawaii, which said that it had no jurisdiction over the anti-trust case being pursued by the US Department of Justice against local carriers.

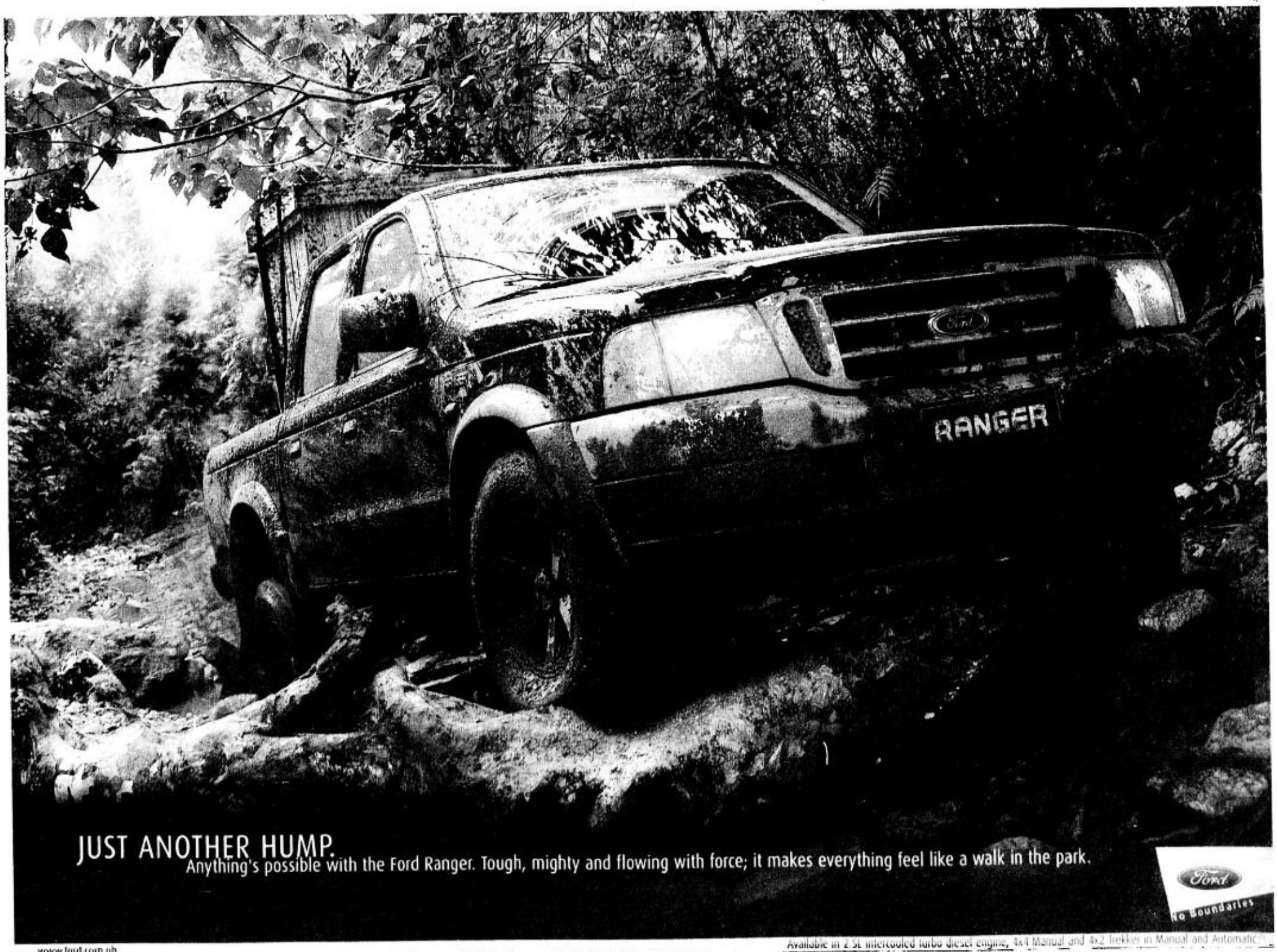
The Hawaii court issued on March 23 an order granting the petition of Globe Telecom Inc. for a motion to quash a US DOJ order last year for the joint venture of Ayala Corp. and Singapore Telecom to submit documents related to the anti-trust case it was building up.

The Hawaii court said that it had no "personal" nor "specific" jurisdiction over Globe.

"Therefore, for lack of jurisdiction, all evidence being subpoenaed from Globe need not be produced," said Globe senior vice president Rodolfo Salalima.

RP/ B4

HSBC, PAL RENEW PARTNERSHIP
Philippine Airlines president and COO Jaime Bautista and HSBC president and CEO Warner Manning sign an agreement to renew their partnership for the continued issuance of the co-branded Mabuhay Miles Visa, which rewards cardholder spending with free travel to PAL's local and international destinations. Every P45 charged to the credit card earns a mile, which can be exchanged for free flights or service upgrades. HSBC's Mabuhay Miles Visa is one of the fastest growing card products in the market, with close to 150,000 cards issued in only two years, five times more than the initial target of HSBC and PAL.



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Connection woes with Smart seen to cost Sun ₱5M/month

By Clarissa S. Batino

SUN CELLULAR yesterday claimed that its interconnection problems with Smart Communications Inc. would cost it P65 million in revenue a year, or P5.44 million a month.

William Pamintuan, senior vice president of Digitel Mobile Philippines Inc. said that on a daily basis, the company would have earned P181,433 more from its short messaging, or texting, service if only Sun Cellular had an efficient interconnection with Smart.

Sun Cellular is the trade name of Digitel Mobile Phils. Inc., a unit of Digital Telecommunications Phils. Inc.

In a letter to the National Telecommunications Commission dated March 9, Sun Cellular said 89 percent of its calls to Smart had not been connected, while outgoing text messages to the same network also were not received.

Sun Cellular said there had been "a high incidence of voice call and SMS failures" with Smart.

Pamintuan said the number of messages sent daily from Sun Cellular to Smart had dropped to 887,187 from an average of 1.06 million.

He claimed that Digitel lost P318,214.07 in revenue from March 9 to 17 because Smart refused to receive calls from Sun Cellular.

"The intermittent voice call and SMS links failure have been adversely affecting Digitel's efficiency to the detriment and prejudice of Sun Cellular subscribers," Pamintuan said. "Our monitoring shows that our calls are able to pass through the interconnect links, but when it is about to reach Smart's network, the calls do not pass through anymore."

According to Digitel, it has three signaling SMS links with Smart, two of which are already congested. The addition of five more SMS links would have addressed the problem, but Smart refused to install the connection, Pamintuan said.

"Why add more interconnect links when [Sun Cellular] has only 1.7 million subscribers?" asked Rogelio Quevedo, Smart's legal officer. "There is no need for additional links because no one from Sun Cellular is calling Smart."

Smart and Talk N' Text ended 2004 with 19.2 million subscribers.

Quevedo said Sun Cellular's network congestion was not the fault of Smart.

"Why are they trying to put the blame on us, we had nothing to do with it," added the Smart official. "They should have expanded their network before they offered the unlimited service."

Interconnection is crucial especially for smaller players like Sun Cellular because it would have a harder time attracting subscribers if its network could not hook up with bigger players.

The Gokongwei firm scored big with subscribers when it launched its 24/7 plan last October wherein calls and texts within the network are charged P350 a month or P100 for 7 days.

Banks expect 20% profit growth this year

By Michelle V. Remo

VIRATA

BANKS are expecting growth in profits by 10 to 15 percent this year, according to the Bankers Association of the Philippines.

The projection was made after several major banks unloaded a significant amount of their non-performing assets by taking advantage of the Special Purpose Vehicle law.

"The volume of NPAs is a great load on the cost of banks," said Cesar Virata, president of the Bankers Association of the Philippines. "[With the selling of their NPAs], most banks are saying they will grow 10 to 15 percent this year."

Virata said the banking industry is bullish this year, after experiencing an estimated 8-percent year-on-year decline in profits in 2004.

With the positive impact of the unloading of NPAs on banks' profits, the BAP is pushing for an extension of the SPV law for another two years.

Under the law, banks only have until April 8, 2005 to sell their bad assets if they want to avail themselves of the privileges, such as tax perks, granted under the SPV law.

A bill has been filed in Congress to extend the validity of the law.

But legislators are currently preoccupied with hearing the tax measures, such as the increase in the value-added tax rate from 10 to 12 percent.

Virata said the banking industry expects to unload P100 billion worth of non-performing loans this year, and another P100 billion next year if its appeal for a two-year extension would be granted.

The banking industry is actually saddled with about P500 billion worth of NPLs.

If the SPV law will be extended, the industry expects to improve and reduce its NPL ratio to only below 5 percent within two years from last year's over 12 percent, according to Virata.

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Pag-Ibig to issue ₱5B worth of bonds

THE PAG-IBIG Fund, the primary fund provider for government's housing programs, is set to issue P5 billion worth of bonds in April to refinance maturing loans.

First Metro Investment Corp., the investment banking arm of the Metrobank Group, is jointly underwriting the bond issue with the Development Bank of the Philippines (DBP).

FMIC executive vice-president Roberto Dispo said the issuance would refinance P4 billion in agri-agra bonds that would mature next month.

The proceeds of the issue will also be used to intensify Pag-Ibig Fund's general housing program.

Dispo said underwriters were working out a possible greenshoe option or the additional issuance of P2 billion worth of bonds on top of the P5-billion debt offering.

Elizabeth L. Sanchez

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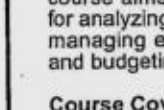

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FREE information sessions will be held on

March 30 (Wed) at 6:30 p.m.
April 2 (Sat) at 10:30 a.m. and 2:30 p.m.

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BREAKTIME

Conrado R. Banal III

JUST when everybody thought it was safe to ride the bus on Edsa again, along came the House of Representatives, adopting the idea of this cute administration to kill us slowly.

When nobody was looking, the House quickly approved that administration bill which sought to pin us down with the imposition of VAT on—of all things—electricity.

Now that's the value added tax, which is only 10 percent, but which may go up to 12 percent soon if this cute administration of Gloriaetta will have its way with us. Guess who must shoulder the tax? Hint: Not the terrorists.

Now, to make our lives a bit less miserable, the House has this bright idea to burden us with the electricity VAT only gradually.

Under the House version, the VAT on power will be 4 percent in the first year, 6 percent in the second, 8 percent in the third, and finally 12 percent in the fourth.

Why, thank you, kind madams and sirs At least in the hands of this cute administration of Gloriaetta, we die a slow death. Terrorists just kill us right away.

* * *

THEY are still fighting over the VAT bill in the Senate. Nevertheless, based on news reports, several senators have already pledged the tax measure to Malacañang.

As we all know, except perhaps a couple of senators, almost all types of business have the so-called "input" VAT, which they can deduct from the actual VAT payment.

There is no such thing in power generation. Thus, Napocor and the so-called IPP, or independent power producers, must pay the entire 10 or 12 percent.

It becomes a pure tax in other words, and the whole of it—not just half of a third, but the **whole** of it—will immediately appear on our electric bills.

The view of a couple of lawmakers that the proposed VAT law can actually force the power producers to shoulder the new tax is just that—a view.

In reality, however, the users of electricity in the end must pay for it, one way or another. VAT is a tax on users, right? Do we hear any more bright idea, boss?

* * *

AS A product, electricity has been exempted form VAT ever since the administration of Tita Cory has adopted the system in 1988.

The reasoning then was clear: Imposing the VAT on electricity would not only burden consumers, it would wreak havoc on the economy.

Today, perhaps thinking that we have become the richest country in the world, this cute administration wants to take away the exemption.

Sure, this cute administration already boasted at one time that it succeeded where others before it had failed. Gloriaetta brought down the power rates.

She only did it through some strange miracle called "subsidy." As everybody knows, subsidy is like drugs. It is a short-term fix, and it kills you in the end.

And so today, even with the subsidy and all, we still have the second highest power rates in Asia, next only to Japan's, which does not exactly show us a bright future.

* * *

HERE is a snapshot of the picture of VAT effect on the consumer.

Electric cooperatives outside Metro Manila, or those belonging to the Association of Philippine Electric Cooperatives, or the Apec, have around six million household members.

With the VAT, all those families will have to pay about 44 centavos more per kilowatt hour of electricity. Today, without the VAT, their rates are between P4 and P8 per kilowatt hour.

Here in Metro Manila, which belongs to the Meralco franchise, it is estimated that the VAT will jack up the electricity rate by about 60 centavos per kilowatt hour.

But in the Meralco franchise areas, due to such treats as national and local government franchise taxes, we actually pay more for power. The rates here are about P8.75 per kilowatt hour.

See that—here in Metro Manila, we already pay for higher power rates, and then we even have to pay a higher VAT.

Unfortunately, not everybody in the metropolis can afford the rate increase from the VAT. Gosh, there's even a bigger concentration of the poor here than elsewhere in the country.

And then they even kill us with bombs planted in buses, and with photo releases of Gloriaetta doing traditional cloth weaving or something. So who's minding the store?

* * *

LET us just force the IPPs and Napocor to absorb the VAT, according to some lawmakers. Right away, boss!

It's just that, based on the prevailing legal thinking on the VAT, it is really a "pass through" tax.

Down here in my barangay, "pass through" simply means that whatever VAT rate the government imposes on the IPPs and Napocor, the latter will simply charge it on us.

But the lawmakers insist that they can prohibit such a VAT assist-pass in the VAT law itself, even citing Supreme Court rulings in the United States. Oh yeah?

It turned out it was only one state in the United States, actually, and in that state, the only Supreme Court ruling on VAT said that it is a ... well, "pass through" tax.

If the law forces the IPPs and Napocor to absorb the VAT, I'm afraid that court cases will start flying all over the place. It's not exactly good for our future either.

* * *

AS I HAVE been saying before I was erotically interrupted, any mess-up in the power sector can delay the privatization of Napocor.

That is the big ticket in the agenda of this cute administration, by the way, its supposed legacy to the nation.

Easily Napocor can fetch P250 to P300 billion. It is the kind of cash that the government needs to jumpstart the economy by going full-blast into infrastructure, for instance.

Not only that, ridding itself of Napocor makes the government avoid yearly subsidies of P60 to P80 billion to the state-owned power company.

Now, if we are lucky, and the BIR shapes up in the honesty front, the VAT on power is expected to yield only about P15 billion a year. You do the math.

* * *

LIKE it or not, Napocor remains a big thorn in the fiscal side of this cute administration.

In fact, some congressmen, such as Rep. Arnulfo Fuentebella of Camarines Sur, want the government to effect power rates that show the true cost.

You know, not these subsidized rates.

But that will raise the power rates, right? Well, their thinking is, so does the imposition of the VAT.

If we are going to raise the rates, anyway, they prefer that we raise them to lessen the government subsidy. It has a bigger impact on the fiscal problem than the VAT imposition.

It also creates long term prospects in the power business. Remember, we are facing another power shortage come 2008.

Good heavens, that's only three years from now. If nobody invests in power generation, we are once again going to the dogs. Or terrorist training camps!

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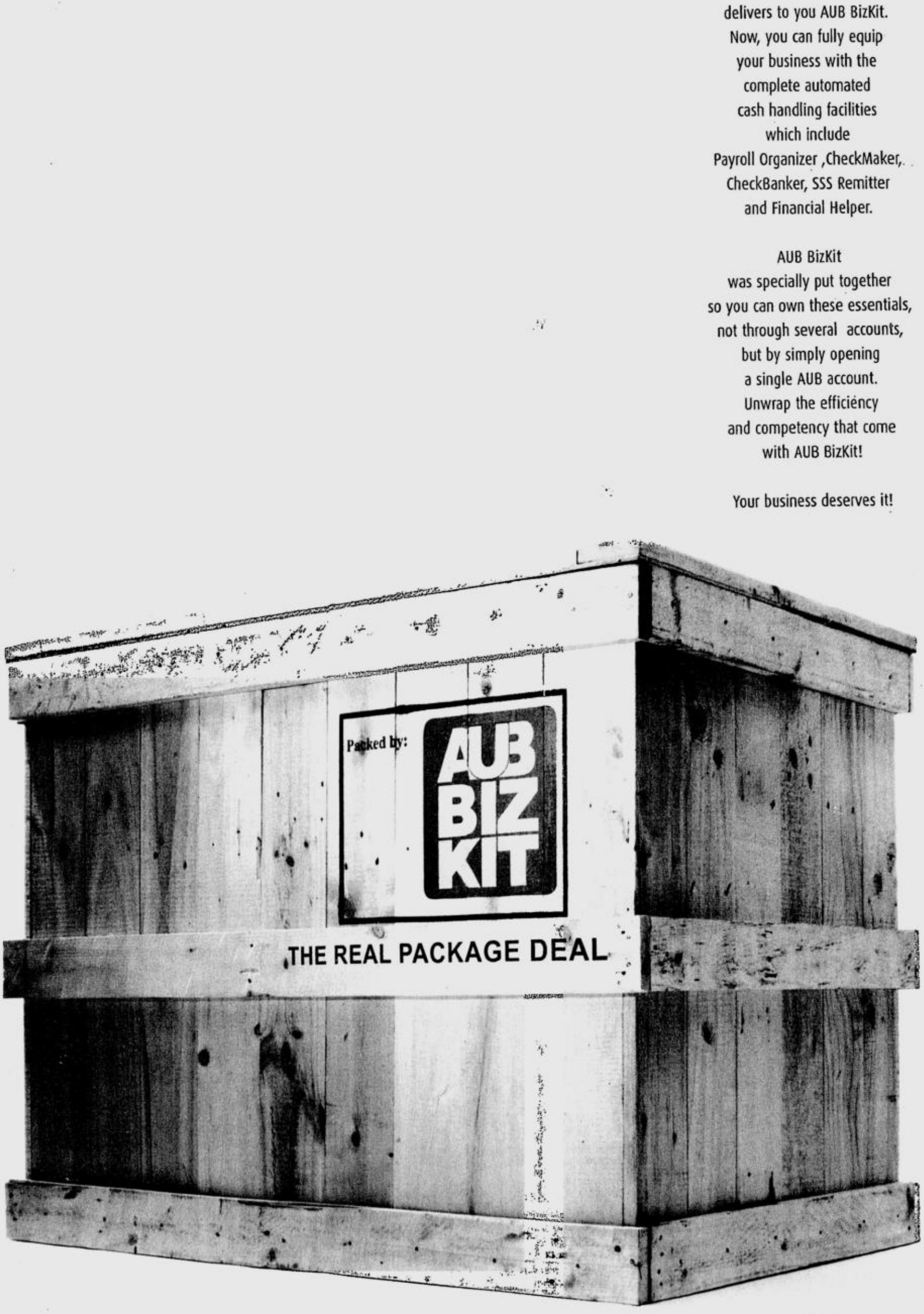

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Hot money starts flowing out

MR. BEARBULL

Ron Nathan

WHILE on a long vacation, I bought an American newspaper and found some hilarious true articles in it. Saves me thinking up lots of jokes:

In Michigan, a man was shot by his cat. Joseph Stanton was home alone Tuesday night when the police received a 911 call. They found him on the kitchen floor with a bullet in his torso. Apparently, a 9mm handgun was lying on a counter while he was cooking dinner, his cat knocked it down and it fired. He was reported to be in the hospital on Thursday in stable condition. (It could have been catastrophic).

A Labrador retriever went beyond the call of duty when he retrieved a bag of marijuana from a creek. Matthew Porter and two obese friends were playing minigolf in Dallas when a police officer approached him while investigating a strange smell. While showing his identification, the dog brought the bag of pot into the office. Porter was charged with possession of the drug. (Pot belly).

In London, doctors told a man that he is allergic to his girlfriend's hormones and must stay away from her 4 days a month. The mystery began 4 months ago when Matt Blaines and Chloe Height decided to live together. A kiss or a hug would result in his breaking out in a red, itchy rash or welts. A leading dermatologist said it was an extremely rare case, but not completely unknown. She mr. (missed her period).

Hotels are used to the customers stealing towels, but one couple liked the shower in their room so much that they took the entire unit home. The man and his girlfriend turned the water off before ripping the shower right out of the bathroom wall. The couple paid for their room in cash and left the hotel owner with a huge repair bill. The police sergeant, Tom Jones, called the theft unusual.

My wife and daughter just returned from her town where they attended the 100th birthday of my wife's Lolo. I could not understand how people could live that long as there is no doctor and the nearest hospital is far away. Then I discovered the answer. The village is so remote that germs and viruses cannot find it. The *bagoong* factory has been supplying Iran with its product to mix with its enriched uranium—a lethal weapon, especially when *durian* is added.

An evangelist minister had to resign after pictures appeared showing him in a hot tub with two women. He claimed it was just a baptism gone terribly wrong.

Obviously, there is not much to write about as the local market was closed for most of last week at the request of Henry Sy. The PHISIX fell 183 points since my suppressed SELL signal 2 weeks ago.

The President is calling back the lawmakers for a 3-day session if she can get a quorum. Assuming she can, I don't think she can bully them into passing the 12-percent VAT bill as they also have their pride. I think they will continue their debate and then deliver a version that is less than what she wants but better than the House version. That should be enough to satisfy the stock market. There are still 5 bills to go and she will probably have P50 billion without the lateral attrition bill, which will be taken over by Donald Trump.

The failure of SM, which opened at a discount, came as no surprise as it is too expensive and I dissuaded subscribers from applying. I am, however, surprised to see Manila Water fall marginally below the offer price as it was 15 times oversubscribed. It is fortunate that there are no more IPOs pending. Part of the market's weakness is attributable to them taking P33 billion out of the overseas and domestic markets.

Our future depends largely on the economies of the US, Japan and China. The Federal Reserve has just raised rates for the 7th time from 1 percent to 2.75 percent, and the latest comments indicate that this will continue throughout the year. So by end-2005, the FED rate could reach 4 percent as inflation is beginning to become a matter for concern. Last month, the producer price index rose by a worrying 0.8 percent. This month, the consumer price index, excluding oil and food, jumped 0.3 percent, higher than economists expected.

This means that either companies will increase prices, which is inflationary, or they will absorb part of the cost, which will affect profit margins and lead to lower profit growth. Neither scenario is comforting so it is not surprising that the NASDAQ and the S&P 500 are at their lows for the year. As for the bond market, the 10-year bond is yielding over 4.6 percent and 4.9 percent for the 30-year bond. All this suggests that our central bank will have to raise rates very soon. This is bad news because our government is issuing a total of $7 billion in bonds this year, including $3 billion for the GOCCs.

The United States has a massive budget deficit, a huge trade deficit, and the war in Iraq. In a few years, 30 million baby boomers will be retiring and Alan Greenspan has warned that there is not enough money to pay for their index-linked pensions and Medicare. The increased interest rates may help strengthen the dollar but will put pressure on Asian currencies.

Japan looks to be coming out of its 13-year depression, but exports in February dropped 21.7 percent from a year ago due to the high cost of imported oil, although there is still a balance-of-payments surplus. Exports have been the key source of growth in the past few years, accounting for 10 percent of the economy. The main country has been China, including Hong Kong, which accounts for a third of the rise in Japanese exports.

China has been the growth engine of the region and in the last quarter of 2004, GDP grew at 9.25 percent. This has resulted in record prices for commodities, oil, aluminum, etc. China is now having problems with this unsustainable growth rate and is trying to slow down to 8 percent this year. Assuming that they can engineer a soft landing, this does not bode well for Japan.

As for the Philippines, our 3 biggest export markets are the United States, Japan and China. The fall in imports by 2.9 percent is a warning of things to come, and we can expect to see a decline in exports as the year progresses. Only the remittances from the OFWs and the money brought back by the entertainers in Japan are keeping us afloat.

In the past week, there has been a reversal of the hot money flowing into Asia and there were large sales of South Korean and Thai stocks with adverse effects on their currencies. This is now starting to affect the PHISIX and the peso and if we exclude the funds committed to support SM, there has been a steady outflow over the past 4 trading days. Yesterday, there was net selling of P160 million, according to the PSE daily quotation report.

So, even with the risk factor so low, I am staying liquid because this trend is likely to continue throughout the Asian region for some time. The dollar gained against 15 out of 16 currencies and has appreciated 5.1 percent against the euro. The yields of 5.91 percent on the 30-year US treasury bond and 5.65 percent on the 10-year bond are beginning to act like a magnet on the hot money. *mrbearbull@hotmail.com*

RP ...

From page B1

The US government raised the issue of anti-trust in January 2004 when it subpoenaed 30 Philippine telecom executives to appear before an American grand jury.

The case stemmed from the decision of local players to increase their termination rates at the same level and all at the same time in February 2003.

The US justice department required Philippine carriers to produce documents, saying these were crucial in deciding as to whether local players behaved like a cartel when they raised their termination rates two years ago.

Salalima said the Hawaii court decision on Globe would benefit all Philippine carriers that were facing similar legal battles in the United States.

He cautioned, however, that the US DOJ would likely elevate the case to a higher court as what the justice department did in August last year when it asked the Hawaii district court to reconsider a July 2004 decision granting Globe's motion to quash.

"While last week's decision was merely an order granting the motion to quash, the underlying message is that the jury trial should be dismissed," Salalima said in an interview.

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of March 28, 2005)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
BANKS & FINANCIAL SERVICES					
BANKS					
Asiatrust Dev. Bank Inc.	4.2	4.2	4.2	4.2	3,000
Banco de Oro Univ. Bank	27	27	26.5	27	259,600
Bank of the Phil. Islands	54.5	55.5	54.5	55	398,700
China Banking Corp.	660	660	660	660	140
Export and Ind. Bank Inc.	0.75	0.75	0.74	0.75	610,000
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	47	47	46	46	127,100
International Exch. Bank	18.5	18.5	18.5	18.5	131,000
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	36.5	37	35.5	36	289,200
Philippine National Bank	36	36	34.5	35	175,700
Phil. Savings Bank	30	32.5	30	32.5	2,000
Rizal Comm. Banking Corp.	14.25	14.25	14	14	22,200
Security Bank Corp.	28	28	28	28	118,400
Union Bank of the Phil.	29.5	29.5	29.5	29.5	22,000
FINANCIAL SERVICES					
First Metro Invest. Corp.	250	250	250	250	400
Manulife Financial Corp.	2460	2460	2460	2460	760
Phil. Stock Exchange Inc.	155	155	155	155	10,000
Sun Life Financial Inc.	1670	1675	1670	1675	330
COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL					
COMMUNICATION					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	16	16	15.5	15.5	85,900
Digital Telecom Phils Inc.	1.26	1.28	1.22	1.22	4,293,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	900	900	875	875	11,450
Ipeople Inc.	4.9	4.95	4.9	4.95	6,000
Island Info and Tech Inc.	0.05	0.05	0.05	0.05	5,500,000
Pilipino Tel. Corp.	3.55	3.55	3.5	3.5	1,141,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	1415	1420	1400	1400	168,260
Ivantage Corp.	0.76	0.76	0.75	0.75	630,000
Philweb Corp.	0.02	0.021	0.02	0.021	39,500,000
POWER, ENERGY & OTHER UTILITIES					
Manila Electric Co. A	19.75	19.75	19.25	19.25	48,500
Manila Electric Co. B	27.5	27.5	26.5	26.5	1,064,700
Manila Water Co. Inc.	6.7	6.7	6.4	6.5	18,997,000
Petron Corp.	3.75	3.8	3.6	3.6	2,342,000
Trans-Asia Oil and Energy	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	4,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Asian Terminals Inc.	1.96	1.96	1.96	1.96	2,000
Aboitiz Trans. Sys. Corp.	1.76	1.76	1.76	1.76	7,000
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	8	8	7.4	7.5	1,838,000
Keppel Phils. Marine Inc.	0.59	0.59	0.59	0.59	50,000
CONSTRUCTION & OTHER RELATED PRODUCTS					
Engineering Equip. Inc.	0.66	0.66	0.65	0.65	300,000
Holcim Philippines Inc.	3.65	3.8	3.6	3.75	2,428,000
Republic Cement Corp.	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.1	6,000
FOOD, BEVERAGES & TOBACCO					
Alaska Milk Corp.	3.75	3.75	3.65	3.65	28,000
Cosmos Bottling Corp.	3.9	3.9	3.9	3.9	16,000
Jollibee Foods Corp.	26.5	27	26.5	26.5	196,300
Swift Food Inc.	0.38	0.38	0.38	0.38	80,000
San Miguel Corp. A	56	56	55.5	56	268,800
San Miguel Corp. B	81	81.5	81	81.5	370,900
Universal Robina Corp.	12	12.25	12	12	131,000
Vitarich Corp.	0.29	0.3	0.29	0.3	1,000,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Abacus Con Res & Hdg A	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	3,500,000
Ayala Corp.	7.7	7.8	7.7	7.7	2,056,000
Alsons Cons. Res. Inc.	0.57	0.57	0.57	0.57	150,000
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	4.8	4.8	4.65	4.65	646,000
A. Soriano Corp.	2.06	2.06	2.04	2.04	495,000
APC Group Inc.	0.46	0.46	0.39	0.44	120,000
Alcorn Gold Res. Corp.	0.0075	0.0075	0.007	0.007	7,000,000
Bacnotan Cons Indus Inc.	20	20	15	16.5	19,500
Boulevard Holdings Inc.	0.13	0.13	0.13	0.13	30,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	1.12	1.14	1.1	1.14	10,338,000
Crown Equities Inc.	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	250,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	3.7	3.75	3.7	3.75	1,406,000
Ever-Gotesco Resources	0.055	0.055	0.055	0.055	2,000,000
Filinvest Dev. Corp.	1.58	1.58	1.54	1.58	917,000
Fil-Hispano Holdings Corp.	9.9	9.9	9.6	9.6	889,000
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	55	55	53.5	54	298,800
Forum Pacific Inc.	0.23	0.29	0.23	0.29	40,000
House Of Investments Inc.	1.8	1.8	1.78	1.78	153,000
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc.	3.6	3.6	3.6	3.6	60,000
Macroasia Corp.	2.02	2.02	2	2.02	76,000
Medco Holdings	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	100,000
Megaworld Corp.	1.56	1.56	1.48	1.48	1,348,000
Mabuhay Holdings Corp.	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	30,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.51	0.53	0.51	0.52	7,280,000
SM Investments Corp.	244	244	228	235	3,813,880
South China Resources Inc.	0.75	0.75	0.75	0.75	60,000
Univide Holdings Inc.	0.16	0.16	0.16	0.16	40,000
Wellex Industries Inc.	0.205	0.205	0.205	0.205	50,000
Waterfront Phils. Inc.	0.35	0.35	0.32	0.32	110,000
MANUFACTURING, DISTRIBUTION & TRADING					
Mabuhay Vinyl Corp.	0.83	0.9	0.83	0.9	40,000
Picop Resources Inc.	0.135	0.14	0.135	0.135	4,140,000
Pryce Corp.	0.33	0.33	0.33	0.33	400,000
HOTEL, RECREATION & OTHER SERVICES					
Belle Corp.	1.32	1.36	1.28	1.32	10,656,000
Leisure & Resorts Corp.	1.56	1.56	1.52	1.54	2,880,000
Premiere Ent. Prod. Inc.	0.28	0.29	0.28	0.29	3,380,000
BONDS, PREFERRED & WARRANTS					
ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp. (Pdr)	15.5	15.5	14.75	15	508,000
PLDT (10% Pref) Series O	10.25	10.25	10.25	10.25	1,200
PLDT (10% Pref) Series Q	10.25	10.25	10.25	10.25	1,000
PLDT (10% Pref) Series R	10.25	10.25	10.25	10.25	1,000
PLDT (10% Pref) Series T	10.25	10.25	10.25	10.25	700
OTHERS					
Centro Escolar University	7	7	7	7	1,000
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	8.3	8.5	8.3	8.4	11,871,000
Cebu Holdings Inc.	1.04	1.04	1.02	1.04	470,000
C & P Homes Inc.	0.3	0.31	0.3	0.31	470,000
Cyber Bay Corp.	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	320,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.5	0.52	0.5	0.51	4,940,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	1.7	1.7	1.58	1.6	12,101,000
Fil-Estate Land Inc.	0.76	0.76	0.76	0.76	20,000
Philippine Estates Corp.	0.21	0.21	0.21	0.21	10,000
Robinsons Land Corp.	4.65	4.65	4.65	4.65	121,000
Phil Realty And Holdings	0.27	0.27	0.27	0.27	1,180,000
SM Development Corp.	1.8	2	1.7	1.7	28,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	8	8.1	7.8	7.9	5,781,000
MINING					
Apex Mining Co. Inc. B	1.02	1.02	1.02	1.02	130,000
Abra Mining & Industrial	0.011	0.011	0.011	0.011	22,100,000
Atlas Cons. Min & Dev't	5.8	5.8	5.8	5.8	94,000
Benguet Corp. A	8.5	9.1	8.5	9.1	37,000
Benguet Corp. B	24	24	24	24	21,200
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A	0.38	0.38	0.37	0.37	2,110,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co B	0.42	0.42	0.4	0.41	520,000
Manila Mining Corp. A	0.017	0.018	0.017	0.018	3,400,000
Manila Mining Corp. B	0.025	0.025	0.024	0.025	17,300,000
Omico Corp.	0.008	0.0085	0.0075	0.0075	197,000,000
Philex Mining Corp. A	1.16	1.18	1.16	1.16	1,032,000
Philex Mining Corp. B	1.4	1.42	1.4	1.4	904,000
Semirara Mining Corp.	40	41	40	40.5	227,400
OIL					
Interport Res.	0.006	0.006	0.006	0.006	10,000,000
Interport Res. B	0.0065	0.0065	0.0065	0.0065	1,000,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. B	0.007	0.007	0.007	0.007	85,000,000
The Philodrill Corp. A	0.36	0.36	0.36	0.36	200,000
The Philodrill Corp. B	0.38	0.38	0.38	0.38	160,000
Petroenergy Res. Corp.	2.6	2.6	2.6	2.6	94,000
Sinophil Corp.	0.18	0.185	0.18	0.185	2,390,000

DISCLOSURES

THELMO Cunanan was elected director of **Belle Corp.**

* * *

BOGO-MEDELLIN Milling Company Inc. will hold its annual stockholders' meeting on April 29, 10 a.m. at Barangay Luy-a, Medellin, Cebu. Only stockholders of record as of March 21 are entitled to notice of and to vote at the meeting.

* * *

FIL-ESTATE Land Inc. will hold its annual stockholders' meeting on April 19, 8:30 a.m. at the Garden Ballroom of Edsa Shangri-La Plaza Hotel, Mandaluyong City. Only stockholders of record as of Feb. 28 are entitled to vote during the meeting.

* * *

MABUHAY Vinyl Corp. will hold its annual stockholders' meeting on April 28, 3 p.m. at the Makati Sports Club. Stockholders of record as of March 31 will be entitled to notice of and to vote at the meeting.

* * *

JOSE Antonio was elected director of **EIB Realty Developers Inc.**

* * *

THE TRADING symbol of **Equitable PCI Bank Inc.** was changed to EPCI from EBC last March 22. ***Compiled by Maricar D. Tolosa, PDI Research***

Stocks down 0.61%

From page B1

The Philippine Stock Exchange composite index fell 12.2 points to 1,986.95 after trading between 1,986.65 and 2,009.15 on turnover of 529 million shares worth P1.7 billion.

The broader all-shares index fell 22.80 points to 1,172.33.

Losers outnumbered gainers 45 to 26, with 48 stocks unchanged.

"The market still has a hangover after the long vacation. Investors are also waiting to see if Congress will be able to pass the VAT [value-added tax increase]," said Lawrence de Leon of Accord Capital Equities.

President Arroyo has called a special session of Congress for later this week to pass the increase in VAT to 12 percent from 10 percent which the government says is urgently needed to avoid a fiscal crisis. Some legislators have been blocking passage of the bill.

SM Investments, the most actively traded stock, closed down P6 to P235.

The company had a disappointing trading debut last Tuesday, closing P9 below its initial public offering price of P250, as investors cashed out ahead of the long Easter break.

Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. was down P30 at P1,400.

Manila Water was up 10 centavos at P6.50 while Ayala Land Inc. added 30 centavos at P8.40. *AFP*

Batangas, Bataan considered for $2-B coal-to-fuel project

By Abigail L. Ho

AMERICAN firm Headwaters Technology Innovations Group (HTIG) has identified key areas in Bataan and Batangas as prospective sites for its planned $2-billion coal-to-fuel conversion facility.

Antonio Ver, president and chief operating officer of CPI Energy Companies, the local partner of HTIG, said site determination formed part of the first two steps of the four-step process involved in the establishment of the plant.

The proponents were able to pinpoint prospective areas in Bataan and Batangas even when they had just started the first step of the process.

The sites were initially chosen, he said, for their good port facilities.

"We're considering the sites' access to water transport, which will make it easier for us to transport the coal that will be used in the conversion process," he told the INQUIRER in a recent interview.

The group last week had its first official meeting for the planning stage, or step 1, of the establishment of the first coal conversion facility in the country.

HTIG vice president and chief technology officer Theo Lee said step 1 involved the determination of what exactly the project was, the drafting of an economic overview that would determine the project's viability, and the conduct of a detailed study of the prospective plant sites as well as of the coal to be converted into various fuels. After this, the proponents will determine the things to do in the next three stages of the project.

Step 1, which would be funded by equity infusions from the project participants, should be completed in four months, Ver said.

The next step, Lee said, would involve some experimental work.

This includes experiments that will give the group a more accurate number in terms of the plant's prospective fuel yield. "These experiments should also give us an idea of what sort of fuels that we should produce there," he explained.

The ideal size of the plant, as well as its economic viability and attractiveness to investors, would also be determined in step 2, he added.

The third step would involve the conduct of the feasibility study on the proposed plant.

By this time, Lee said the actual investment for a commercial-sized plant as well as the major equipment specifications for the facility should already be determined.

Under step 3, a pilot plant to be fed 25 kg of coal per day would be established to determine the suitability of local coal to Headwaters' coal-to-fuel technology, he said.

After completing the first three steps of the process, the fourth and last step would already involve the establishment of the plant, which will be capable of producing 50,000-70,000 barrels of fuel per day.

This facility would be as big as the one HTIG is currently putting up in China, in partnership with the Shenhua Group, China'a largest coal company.

BPO industry gets help

THE DUTCH government has launched a program that would help Philippine business process outsourcing firms clinch contracts in Europe through aid in knowing the market, the competition and possible partners.

The Department of Trade and Industry said The Netherlands' Center for the Promotion of Imports from Developing Countries (CBI) was implementing the program in cooperation with the DTI's Bureau of Export Trade Promotion.

CBI's BPO Program is meant to assist service providers to build and improve marketable capabilities, services and European market knowledge and provide training on market information marketing, technology trends, processes, project management, competition and related topics.

The program also aims to help local BPO firms identify and benchmark strong service providers in their target countries, as well as introduce them to the European market through business matching and promotion opportunities.

Trade Undersecretary Thomas G. Aquino said a CBI consultant had just visited the country to scout for possible beneficiaries of the program.

Aquino explained that aside from the Philippines, the program also covered India and South Africa.

"(CBI's program would help us in) our objective to further position the country as a hub for information technology-enabled services," Aquino said. ***Ronnel W. Domingo***

Corporations urged to raise funds via FIE

By Michelle V. Remo

THE BANGKO Sentral ng Pilipinas is targeting to have at least 20 percent of the funding requirements of corporations raised through bond issues, now that the Fixed Income Exchange (FIE) has been established.

The outstanding loans of corporate entities were estimated at P1.3 trillion.

BSP Governor Rafael Buenaventura said that of the amount, almost 99 percent was raised through loans from banks.

He said the central bank and the private-sector proponents of the FIE, an open market for fixed-income securities, are expecting that the new facility will significantly strengthen the domestic capital market, such that companies will now have diversified sources of funding.

The BSP chief also noted that in the United States, only 20 percent of the total funding requirement of corporations was being raised through the usual bank loans, while 80 percent was being generated via its vibrant fixed-income market.

"This way, banks can concentrate on lending to small- and medium-sized enterprises," Buenaventura said during the launching of the FIE yesterday.

He added that with a more active local fixed-income market, banks could use a bigger part of their resources to other activities such as real estate and housing.

Cesar Crisol, president and chief operating officer of the Philippine Dealing and Exchange Corp., the organization running the FIE, said that the newly established formal market for fixed-income securities would help increase liquidity. Investors, he said, would have a wide array of investment instruments in the FIE to choose from.

With the FIE, even long-term securities, such as 25-year Treasury bonds, will become attractive to investors.

The BSP expects that with the FIE, long-term government securities will be patronized more by investors. This, it said, will lengthen the average maturity of the government's borrowings.

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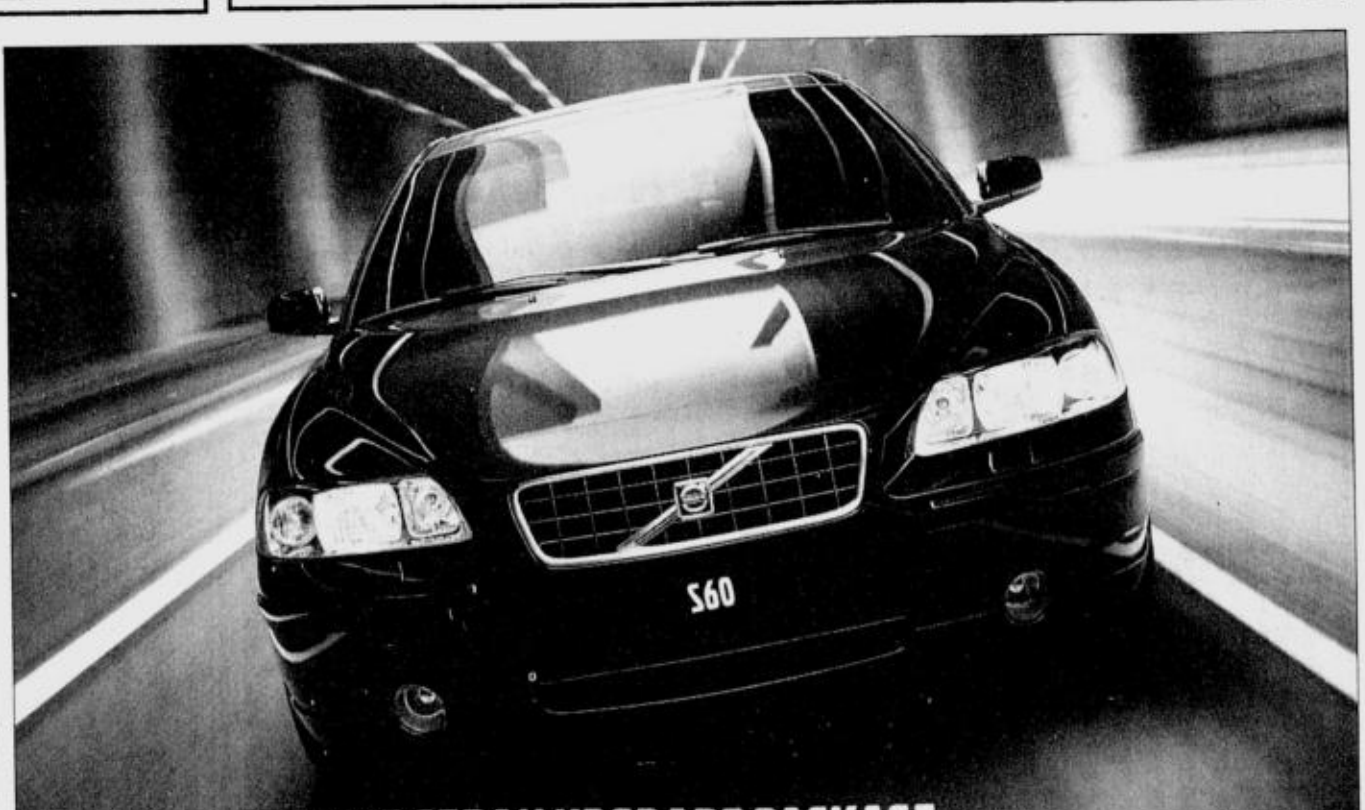

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ANNOUNCEMENT

March 18, 2005

TO : ALL RICE BASED FARMERS' ORGANIZATIONS (FOs) / OTHER SECTORS INTERESTED TO PARTICIPATE IN THE RICE IMPORTATION UNDER 2005 PRIVATE SECTOR RICE IMPORTATION PROGRAM

Please be informed that the NFA Council per Resolution No. 213-2K5 dated March 02, 2005 has approved the suspension of paragraph A-11 of Memorandum Circular AO-2K5-01-001 dated January 18, 2005 on the General Guidelines on the Participation of Farmer's Organizations and All Other Sectors, Farmer organizations and other sectors who violated the 2003 and 2004 Circulars are allowed to participate in the 2005 rice importation provided they submit to NFA a surety bond to be secured from GSIS equivalent to 10% of the value of the rice cargo, callable upon demand for violations which are procedural in nature such as:

1. Failure to provide NFA and BOC with advance information (at least 10 days before the cargo arrives) on the quality, quantity, origin, supplier, price, expected date of arrival, name of vessel discharging port;
2. Failure to submit to NFA a copy of the sales contract;
3. Failure to use load/discharge port surveyor chosen from a list prescribed by NFA; and
4. Failure to bring into the country the availed volume of rice importation allocation, which are subject to penalty equivalent to 10% of the landed cost of the rice.

Farmer organizations and other sectors whose violations involved delay in the arrival of rice and penalized by 50% of the landed cost of rice cargo are disqualified in the 2005 rice importation unless penalties have been paid.

However, the above suspension is without prejudice to whatever legal action the NFA may take on the violations they committed those years.

(Sgd.) GREGORIO Y. TAN, JR.
NFA Administrator

(PDI – March 29, 2005)

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Imus Mayor Homer Saquilayan (seated, third from left) joins the 2005-06 officers of ACM Phase 7 Homeowners Association Inc. in Alapan I-A, Imus, Cavite, after inducting into office (standing from left) Rod Baltazar (auditor), Weng Mirandilla (asst. treasurer), Roland Estrella (sgt.-at-arms), Dory Arriza and Ronnie Givanim (PRO), Weng Maximo (treasurer), Enrique Permalino (sgt.-at-arms), Lourdes Atinion (secretary), Eric Jalandoni (auditor), Raymund Dadpaas (vice president), Santi Alcantara (president) and Maring Constantino (sgt.-at-arms), seated beside Alapan I-A Barangay Chair Tinoy Aman. Not in photo is Gil Fernandez, sgt.-at-arms.

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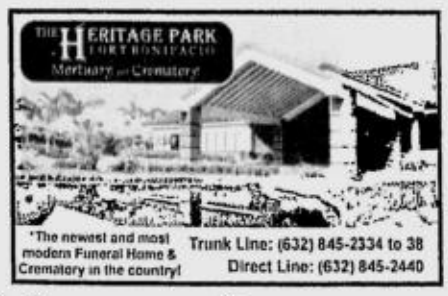

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"In Christ all shall be made alive..." **Corinthians 15:22**

Gloria Carangian de Villa

Loving wife and mother, now peacefully rests in the infinite Grace and Goodness of the Lord on the 24th of March at the age of 65.

Her husband **Maximo**; children **Arnold, Dennis, Marissa, Mariela** and **Dindo**; and children-in-law **Mary Ann** and **Estela**; grandchildren **Nica, AJ, Erika** and **David**, and other relatives and friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her remains lie in state at Our Lady of Peace in Antipolo City.

Interment will be on March 30, 2005, Wednesday, after the 10:30 a.m. Mass at the Gloria Heights Subdivision Chapel, Simeon Lacson Street.

Elysium Gardens

THIS columbarium will have a solarium Building which will feature indoor vaults /crypts where the natural sunlight passes through its glass wall, a **Memorial Plaza** that will accommodate outdoor vaults where the serene garden type setting is in harmony with nature and ecumenical chapel that can be used in memorial services

A Modern classical design columbarium which is conveniently located at 277 E. Rodriguez Sr. Ave., Quezon City, within the Cathedral Heights compound bounded by Trinity College and St. Luke's Medical Center. Construction is on its full swing and is ahead of schedule, So interested buyers and investors

Please call 723-6494 or 723-6335

Stella Marie Roque Galang

Peacefully joined our Lord on March 27, 2005.

Beloved daughter of Gloria T. Roque (†)

Her loving husband **GIL**; loving children **MICO** and **MICA**; father **PONS**; sisters and brothers-in-law **NEL** and **ALEX, LET** and **ED, ALICE** and **BILLY, CAROL** and **LEO**; sisters-in-law and brother-in-law **BELLA, GIGI** and **NILO**; nephews and nieces and other relatives request the pious reader to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her remains lie in state at Solace 2 Chapel, Arlington Memorial Chapels, 12 G. Araneta Ave., Quezon City.

Interment will be on Wednesday, March 30, 2005 at the Loyola Memorial Park, Marikina City after the 9:00 a.m. Mass at St. Paul de Apostle Church, Mother Ignacia St., Quezon City.

"Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for You are with me." **Psalm 23:4**

NELSON DEMDAM LOGRONIO

who passed away in the Grace of our Lord on March 27, 2005.

His loving wife **EDITHA V. LOGRONIO**; children: **Melinda, Jennifer (†), Elizabeth, Victoria, Christopher, Bong**; grandchildren: **James, Jenel, Hannah,** request relatives and friends to pray for his eternal repose.

His remains lie in state at LA FUNERARIA PAZ, Araneta Avenue, Quezon City.

Interment will be at LOYOLA MEMORIAL PARK, Marikina, April 2, 2005 (Saturday), 11:00 a.m.

CLASSIFIEDS

Rebap's first general membership meeting "Rebap No. 1"

THE Real Estate Brokers Association of the Philippines (REBAP), INC., will be holding its First Geenral membership Meeting on March 30 at 6 pm at the Makati Sports Club, Leviste Street, Makati City. The gathering will be attended by more than 300 regular members and guests from its more than 25 chapters in Metro Manila and the provinces.

REBAP national president, Cherith A. Domingo invited Samie Lim, PCCI Vice President to speak on the National Economy in relation to real estate as the highlight of the meeting. REBAP will also be launching the first real estate magazine, "REBAP Magazine". A guide for would-be real estate investors and end users. Other business partners like developers, banks and investors will be gracing the occasion.

JOB Market JOB Market LIBRE SM MEGAMALL
JOBZ EMPLOYMENT EXPO 2005
APRIL 28-30, 2005 MEGATRADE HALL 1, SM MEGAMALL

A new twist to an old tradition. A new domain for an old reliable. Back for the second time around!

Away from the hustle and bustle of the Makati Business District, the most awaited job fair with the most extensive line up of participating companies will once again be staged in the country's biggest mall – – – **JOBZ: EMPLOYMENT EXPO 2005** at **SM Megamall.**

Gear up for the year's initial three-day employment fest on **April 28, 29 and 30** at the **Megatrade Hall 1** of **SM Megamall.** As always, **Job Market** guarantees you benefits no other company can offer - **QUALITY EXPOSURE**, as we feature your products and services on site, online and on print. **SUPERIOR SELECTION**, as we offer you fresh pick from new and eager graduates to join the challenging corporate world. And most of all, we give your hard-earned money **IMPORTANCE** because with us you get more for paying less!

We would like to invite your company to join in this worthwhile investment as a sponsor. Join us and the country's foremost and leading companies as we explore the market for potential recruits to hone and develop. For more information, please contact any Inquirer Classified Ads branch.

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INVITATION TO BID

The AFP Retirement and Separation Benefits System (RSBS) invites interested parties to purchase by way of sealed bids the following properties on cash or term basis (minimum 30% down payment and 17% interest rate for maximum of 7 years to pay):

Item No.	Description	Location	Minimum/ Floor Price
05-1	42.39 sq.m. residential condominium unit	Unit S-09 New Manila Condominium, N. Domingo St., New Manila, Q.C.	P 630,551.25
05-2	House & Lot, F/A 80 sq.m. L/A 1,026 sq.m.	Bgy. Pinagtung-olan, West District, Lipa City	P 985,000.00
05-3	House & Lot F/A 42 sq.m. L/A 170 sq.m.	B8, L4 Mutual Homes Subdivision Ph-III, Putatan, Muntinlupa City	P 602,140.00
05-4	House & Lot F/A 142 sq.m. L/A 134 sq.m.	B10, L8, Area H, San Rafael, San Jose del Monte, Bulacan	P 346,239.21
05-5	House & Lot F/A 42 sq.m. L/A 198 sq.m.	B12, L3 AFP Village, San Mateo, Rizal	P 318,367.50
05-6	House & Lot F/A 42 sq.m. L/A 198 sq.m.	B16 L17 AFP Village, San Mateo, Rizal	P 287,512.50
05-7	House & Lot L/A 138 sq.m. F/A 143 sq.m.	B7, L3 North Matrixville, Camarin Rd., Caloocan City	P 963,007.50
05-8	House & Lot F/A 42 sq.m. L/A 198 sq.m.	B9, L10 AFP Village, San Mateo, Rizal	P 346,519.80
05-9	House & Lot F/A 618.98 sq.m. L/A 2,607 sq.m.	29 Sunflower Drive Beverly Hills, Taytay	P 7,081,592.76
05-10	House & Lot F/A 162 sq.m. L/A 315 sq.m.	B15 L21 #112 Santan Sta., Phase I United Parañaque IV Subdivison Parañaque City	P 1,881,900
05-11	539 sq.m. Residential Lot	B8, L43, Greenbreeze Village VI Bgy. Biclatan, Gen. Trias, Cavite	P 274,890.00
05-12	294 sq.m. Residential Lot	B3, L8, Filinvest, Bgy. Silangan, Capitol, Quezon City	P 1,374,450.00

Interested bidders may obtain bidding documents starting March 28, 2005 upon payment of non-refundable fee of P500.00 from the Office of the Head, Property Management, 3/F, RSBS Bldg., Camp Aguinaldo, Q.C.

A Pre-Bidding Conference is scheduled on April 8, 2005 at 10:00 am, Central Meeting Room A, RSBS, Camp Aguinaldo, Q.C.

Bids will be opened in the presence of bidders or their representatives on April 15, 2005 at 10:00 AM at the Central Meeting Room A, RSBS, Camp Aguinaldo, Q.C.

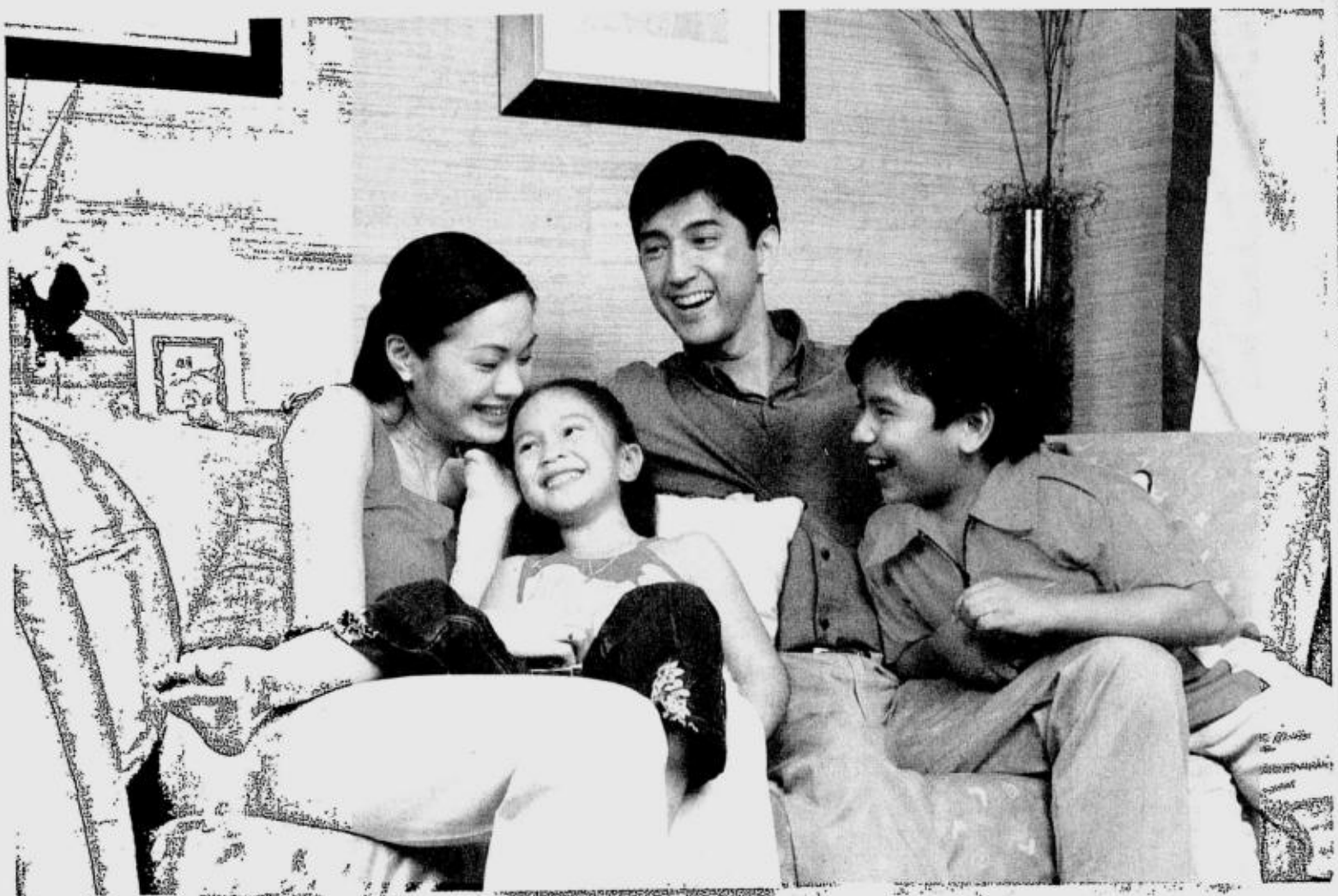
For further inquiries, you can call MS. LIZA HIZON or MR. DARWIN MANZANO at telephone numbers 912-4718 or 911-4071 local 249.

(PDI - March 27, 28 & 29, 2005)

One Central Park

Luxury Residences at Eastwood City

Your Home for All Seasons



Eastwood City beckons as the metro's home of choice. And its newest crown jewel is **One Central Park**. Enjoy a relaxing walk along tree-shaded walkways and stop by a serene lagoon in a delightful park at the foot of your home. Live well in a coddling, convenience-filled environment, with your own playground and shopping mall just a push of a button away.

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10 laws for a better life

If you live in denial by not facing your real life situation, then you are running away from yourself

INSIDE OUT
Cory Quirino

IN HIS book, "Life Strategies—Stop Making Excuses," Dr. Phillip C. McGraw (yes, of Oprah fame) shares his wisdom with all who care to listen—and change. The lessons are in a set of life laws designed to strengthen our lives.

Life Law No. 1: You either get it or you don't.

Some people say, "Don't make foolish mistakes simply because they have figured out that there is a definite formula for success." Know the difference between living and existing.

Existing—a reactive self-preservation with the goal of getting by from day to day.

Living—going through life with skills needed to reach a certain goal. The key is to understand what motivates you and other people. Mastering those skills will get you everywhere.

Assignment: Write down on a piece of paper all the questions you have about your life—considering patterns of old behavior. Challenge them.

Life Law No. 2: You create your own experience.

Accept and acknowledge that you are responsible for your life. You, not anyone else, are accountable for your life, whether it is a success or failure, happy or joyous, good or bad. Understand this. Diagnose your situation well that you may find the right solution. If you accept yourself as a victim, then there is no salvation for you. Accept your accountability now.

Assignment: Ask yourself:

• Why is my life causing me grief?

• Have I been foolish?

• Did I fool myself into believing my choices were not wrong?

• Must I stop my old behavior?

• Did I fail to take action?

• Am I looking in the wrong place for the answers?

Don't be a loser by blaming someone else.

Life Law No. 3: People do what works.

There is a payoff for every behavior. If you identify the pay offs you can control them, and then you can control your life.

Example: You have a family history of cancer, but you are a heavy smoker anyway. Or, you once had ulcers but you continue to drink just the same.

Reward good behavior, not bad behavior. Are you "feeding off some kind of payoffs" that may be detrimental to your mental and emotional health?

Example: You tolerate an abusive husband/wife only because you will not accept a separation/divorce.

Life Law No. 4: You can't change what you don't acknowledge.

If you are unwilling to acknowledge a certain situation in your life, then you are not willing and able to change it. If you live in denial by not wanting to face your real life situation, then you are running away from yourself. Address the denial in your life or continue to deceive yourself.

Life Law No. 5: Life rewards action.

Thought without action is impotent. Better to just do what you say than just say and not do.

Truth: People don't give importance to your intentions. They care about what you do, not what you say.

Assignment: Don't make promises you cannot keep. If you continue to do what you do with no significance, you are in a rut.

Life Law No. 6: There is no reality, only perception.

What you see in a situation is the value you give it—this is your reality. And how you look at it will determine your happiness or peace.

Life Law No. 7: Life is managed; it is not cured.

Holding on to your life and whatever situation you may be in does not guarantee instant results. Hanging in there with determination is the key. Nobody ever said life was easy.

Life Law No. 8: We teach people how to treat us.

How you validate someone's behavior toward you determines how they will treat you. If you feel you deserve better, let him/her know it.

Life Law No. 9: There is power in forgiveness.

Anger and bitterness can consume you. You gain everything by forgiving those who have hurt you.

Life Law No. 10: You have to name it to claim it.

Know what you want. Once you do you can claim it. Indecision will breed inaction. Recognize the behaviors that will support it and not those that will sidetrack you.

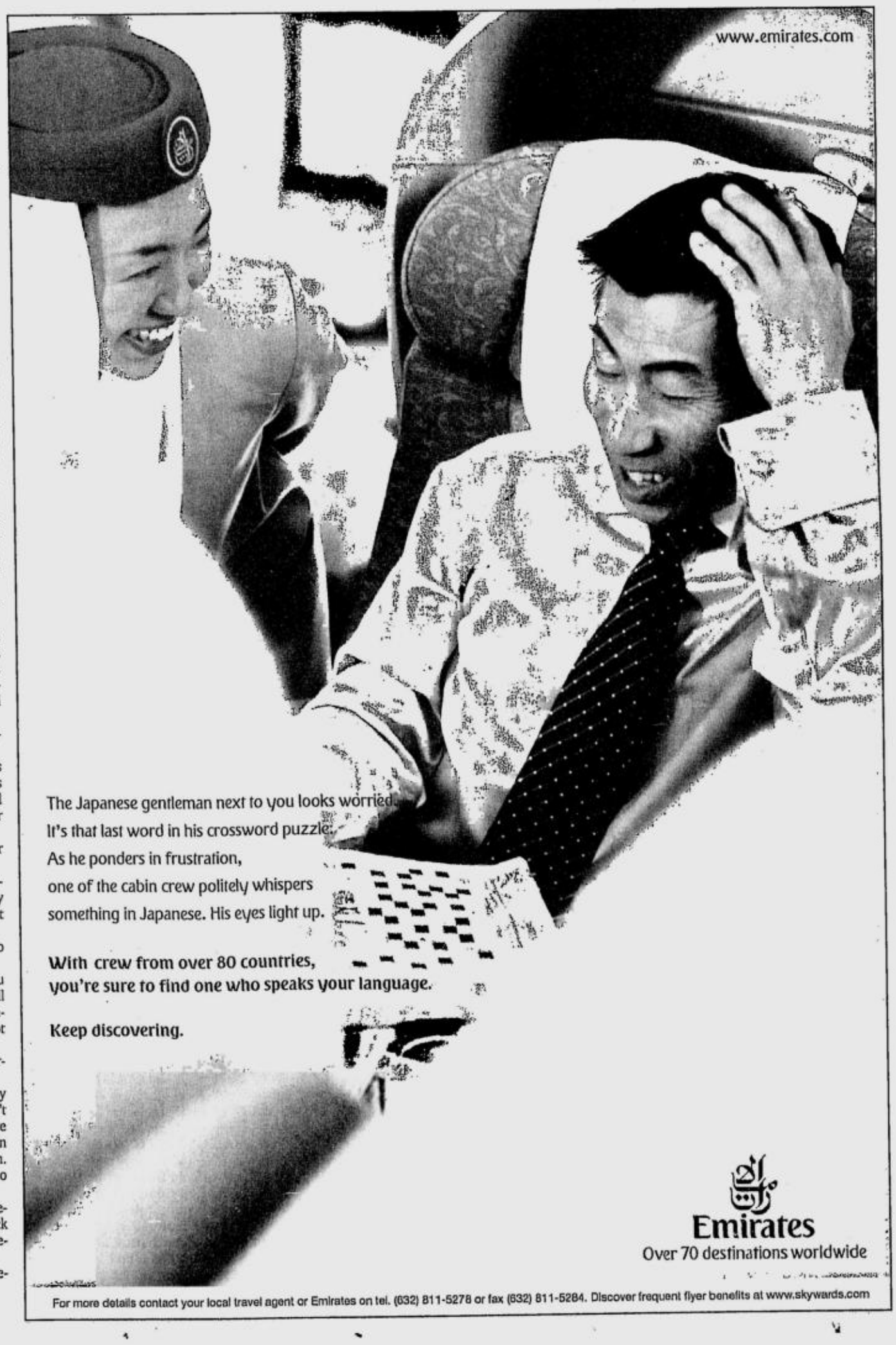
A life situation: You are miserable about your poor health.

Fact: You don't eat healthy food. You don't exercise. You don't admit to yourself that you are making yourself sick. You are in denial about your health problem. You will get sicker if you don't do something about it now.

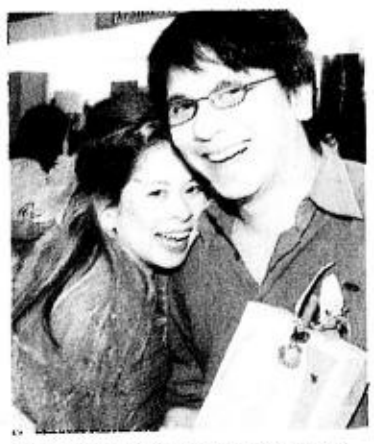
What to do: Admit, accept, renew. Claim your health goal. Back it up with action. Take charge. Reward yourself.

Affirm: "I will succeed in becoming healthy."

Love and light!



FOR FRUITS & PASSION. Stores Specialist Inc. president Zenaida Tantoco with stylish lookers Lizzie Zobel and Kit Zobel



STRAWBERRY-delicious host Tessa Prieto-Valdez cuddles up to computer whiz Elbert Cuenca.

ISABELLE Aselin, Fruits & Passion visual merchandising manager, and Caroline Biltchik, Fruits & Passion business development director

HSBC's Warner Manning with wife Julie

YUMMY MODELS. Desiree Abesamis, Abi Galano, Lou Bunyi, Sarah Jane Paez and Patty Betita

WHITE FOR SUMMER. Ginggay dela Merced with Santi Picornell and Cessie Colayco

Passionate about fruits

TINA Samaco, Nestea brand manager, with Rica Perfecto and Rodel Durano of Power Plant Mall

EUGENE David, Nestle VP hot shot and group product manager for beverages, with Jojo Jabines of Coppertone

OKAY, WE DIG DOOLEY. Fun Barni Alejandro with handsome Brian Tanta

TAN Calo, Kitts Sarte and Maxxium's Art Hyndman

AHH, *palanggas*, as soon as we entered, *moi* instantly felt good from the exhilarating scents at the *tres* successful launch of Stores Specialists Inc.'s newest offering, the first-ever Fruits and Passion boutique in the Philippines at Greenbelt 3. The event brought together Manille's swell-smelling set for cocktails.

Fruits and Passion is not a fruit bar, dahlings. It is a fresh, high-quality and multi-awarded lifestyle brand from Canada that really excites the senses.

We were presented vignettes showing the many uses of Fruits and Passion products in different parts of the home, with several imported brands from Coby's Homes, Kuysen Bath Gallery to Rustan's Home.

Stores Specialists Inc.'s brilliant executive vice president **Anton Huang** and SSI woman of substance president **Zenaida "Nedy" Tantoco**, together with Fruits and Passion's **Caroline Biltchik**, welcomed the hot namedroppables like the very slim **Nini Licaros**; best-dressed philanthropist **Baby Arenas**; ABS-CBN's **Ernie Lopez**; attractive **Mia Dragon-Floirendo**; **DJ Lopez**; multifaceted **Irene Martel Francisco**; vivacious **Grace Glory Go**; **Anton San Diego**, editor of Tatler magazine; **Rowena Tomeldan**; **Margarita Locsin**; **Anton Barretto** of Pineapple; and **Kara Tolentino**, plus others like them.

A toast led by the already *tres* popular Canadian ambassador to the Philippines, **Peter Sutherland**, and his *charmante* wife, **Jo-Lynne**, increased the enthusiasm even more, with a little help from cocktails and vodka provided by the best, Ralph's Wines & Spirits, natch.

Fruits and Passion business development director Caroline Biltchik explained to us the philosophy of the exquisite well-being brand.

One of the several must-have lines *moi* loved was Somnea, the essence of slumber, an entire line for a soothing ritual that will lead to a super restful sleep. This should be great for insomniacs like me.

And for uniqueness, Art Home offers new products for household care, including fragrances that deodorizes without damaging the environment. Now, that's real cool.

Hey, check out the new place, *palanggas* and get passionate about fruits.

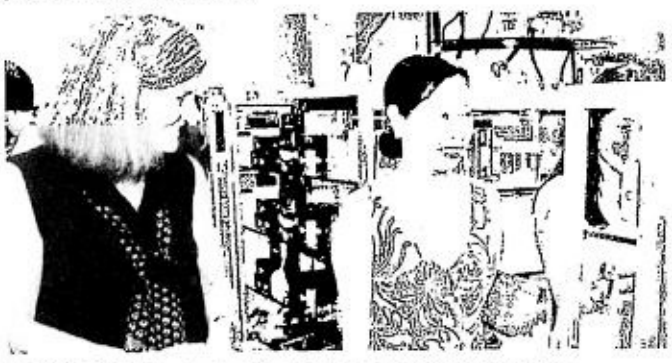
Parties & games

Hey, all you beach lovers and sun worshippers, are you ready for this? Well, you better be, *palanggas*, as we will be treated to the thrill of the most intense and sizzling beach volley action and other super fun activities when Nestea, the one-of-a-kind official drink of our hot summer, holds the ninth installment of the highly successful Nestea Beach Volley.

The Nestea Beach Volley 2005 will not only showcase first-rate competitions among the country's best collegiate teams but will also mean parties in some of the country's hottest spots.

The fun lunch was beautifully hosted by top commercial model **Bia Araneta**. Heading the playful pack were hotshots of Nestea, led by Nestlé vice president and group product manager for beverages, **Eugene David**; Nestlé assistant vice president for promos and events **Raymond Villaflor**; and Nestlé brand manager **Tina Samaco**.

HIP DESIGNER AND HER MODELS. Kit Barraquias, Doraine Cuaso, Ariel Atendido, designer Kate Torralba, Mary Jane Maycon and Rafael Kiefer, with the cream color of Dooley during the fashion show at V-Bar



JO-LYNNE Sutherland, wife of Canadian ambassador Peter Sutherland, and Louie Locsin, wife of Rep. Teddy Boy Locsin, checks out what Fruits is all about.

CANADIAN ambassador Peter Sutherland

BRILLIANT Anton T. Huang, EVP, Stores Specialists, Inc.

GALS LOVE VOLLEYBALL. Carol Bonifacio of Mikasa with Nestea brand events specialist Bun Estavillo, Cley Garcia and Jean Pamintuan of Cebu Pacific

EMMY Bucat of the popular Speedo brand

"We're pretty confident that fans and the public in general will thoroughly enjoy this year's competition, as they do each year," says Eugene David.

La Salle Greenhills is the place to be as the elimination rounds are held April 1-3 for Luzon, and April 5-7 for Visayas and Mindanao. A total of 72 teams from 44 colleges and universities nationwide will vie for the privilege of competing in Boracay and basking in beach volley glory.

Tina Samaco says this year's Nestea Beach Volley will include a series of beach parties.

In Boracay, it will start with a sunset party at Pier One on May 5, followed by a Brazilian luau at Bom Bom and Summer Place on May 6.

On May 7, a victory and sunrise party, expected to last till dawn, will be held at Hey Jude!

Summer's truly shaping up as an exciting season to remember. The Nestea High-flying Beach Volley 2005 in the tropical island paradise that is Boracay certainly is an event to watch year after year.

Hey, *palanggas*, for further details, log on to www.nestea.com.ph.

Toasting a newcomer

A *tres* fashionably intriguing happening was held at the hip and happening V Bar, in Makati to introduce the newest drink in town. The cool bash was a special treat for Manille's young and dynamic party pack that sipped glass after glass of the smooth and delicious Doodley's, which is "set to be the cream spirit of the 21st century."

Well, *moi* took a swig, and found it had the richness of toffee plus the smoothness of vodka and other cream-based liqueurs. You can enjoy it straight up, on the rocks, in martinis, mudslides and with coffee. Hey, not bad, huh?

The event featured a fashion show by designer extraordinaire **Kate Torralba**, whose clothes oozed with sex appeal and showed a playful use of colors and a lot of creativity. She showcased the richness and creaminess of Dooley's and used its colors of red, blue and yellow. Her outfits reflected the fun and hip image of Dooley's Original Toffee and Vodka.

Heading the party gang were Maxxium Singapore's regional area director, **Honathan Chow**; Detlef Kruse, sales director of Behn; Cosmo mag's favorite fashion plate, **Myrza Sison**, and fun-fun **JR Isaac**; Maxxium's **Art Hyndman** and **Vince Santos**; artist **Kiko Escora**, with **Adeline Ooi**; and **Carlo Aguinaldo**, plus, some of the partying animals. They were all there, being seduced by the sweet Dooley's, *palanggas*.

BIANCA Araneta at the Nestea booth with Zack Benitez, Nadz de Claro, Aaron Timoteo and Marge Lopez

JASPER Jimenez of La Salle Greenhills, Rick Lopez and King Orosco of Villa de Oro, and Coach Otie Camangian, Nestea Beach Volley Tournament director

DAPHNE Ann Abatayo, Adrian Go, Olivia Daytia and Maan Osorio at Dooley's V-bar launch

COLORS and sex appeal. Dooley's inspired outfits by Kate Torralba

WITHOUT BATTING AN EYELASH
Maurice Arcache
Photos by Alex Van Hagen using Kodak EasyShare system

Sole hugger

ADIDAS T-MAC 4 in red

The world's first laceless basketball shoe is nicknamed Hug, and it makes Tracy McGrady smile

ADIDAS has introduced the world's first performance laceless basketball shoe, the T-MAC 4 with HUG Systems Technology.

Tracy "T-MAC" McGrady, the American National Basketball Association's leading scorer the last two seasons, recently showcased his latest signature shoe on a specially created basketball court along the Shanghai waterfront.

The T-MAC 4 features a revolutionary closure system that locks the foot securely in place, providing superior comfort and fit.

The process that led to the HUG Systems Technology began back in 2001, in the offices and laboratories of the Adidas innovation team (a.i.t.). The idea came from the closure system on a ski boot.

If the shoe fits

The HUG element fits over the top area of the foot. This is attached to the rear of the shoe by cables that put the element under tension, which is maintained by a closure device on the heel counter. The closure device, a slider/lever system, is used to control the fit. Turning the adjustment wheel moves the slider up and down on the thread, giving the athlete the most precise fit possible.

After extensive testing to find the best cable and strap system and adding the precision lever for the perfect fit, Adidas was ready to take the technology to McGrady.

David Bond, global head of Adidas Basketball, was at that meeting. He commented, "We went to T-MAC and told him that there was the possibility of doing the world's first laceless shoe, and we showed him the prototype. He said if there was any way that we could fit that technology into a hot shoe for him, he wanted to be the first. And then we told him the name of the shoe, that it was called HUG. He got a big smile on his face, and said, 'Yeah, that works.'"

With the technology proven and with the support and excitement of one of the world's greatest basketball players, the project was turned over to the design team.

Inspiration

Kyle Pulli, senior designer for Adidas Basketball footwear, met with McGrady to get a better feel of his personality and style.

"I actually took a lot of inspiration from Tracy's Lamborghini," said Pulli. He said he looked at the back end of the car and that was how the design for the back of the heel came to him.

Explaining the benefits of wearing the first laceless performance basketball shoes, McGrady said, "Kicks with laces always crease after a while and the fit changes throughout the game. So even if the fit is tight at the beginning, it changes by the end of the first quarter."

Since the T-MAC 4 uses a lever at the back of the shoe to lock the foot into place, "the fit never changes, so the shoe never creases and it stays comfortable throughout the game," said McGrady.

A T-MAC 4 apparel package will accompany the footwear, with T-MAC 4 shorts, shirts and jackets being the main components in the collection.

The T-MACs have been among the best-selling sports shoes over the last three years, easily Adidas' best-selling performance basketball shoes ever, with the T-MAC 1 and 2 quickly becoming the No. 1 selling sports shoe in the US after their debut.

Lifetime

After four All-Star seasons with the Orlando Magic, McGrady was traded during the off-season to the Houston Rockets. His arrival in Houston has instantly made Houston one of the favorites in the strong Western Conference.

The Rockets are currently in China playing two exhibition games against the Sacramento Kings, one each in Shanghai and Beijing. The trip marks McGrady's third visit to Asia, as he appeared in Taiwan in 1999 and the Philippines in 2000 on behalf of Adidas.

T-MAC and Adidas signed a lifetime contract in April 2002. The deal, which is for the duration of McGrady's basketball career and beyond, is the most significant contract Adidas has ever signed with a professional athlete.

Along with Tim Duncan and Kevin Garnett, T-MAC helps form Adidas' "Big Three." The three NBA All-Stars are featured in the upcoming Adidas global TV advertising campaign, "Made to Perfection."

TRACY "T-MAC" McGrady and the All Star T-MAC 4 in blue

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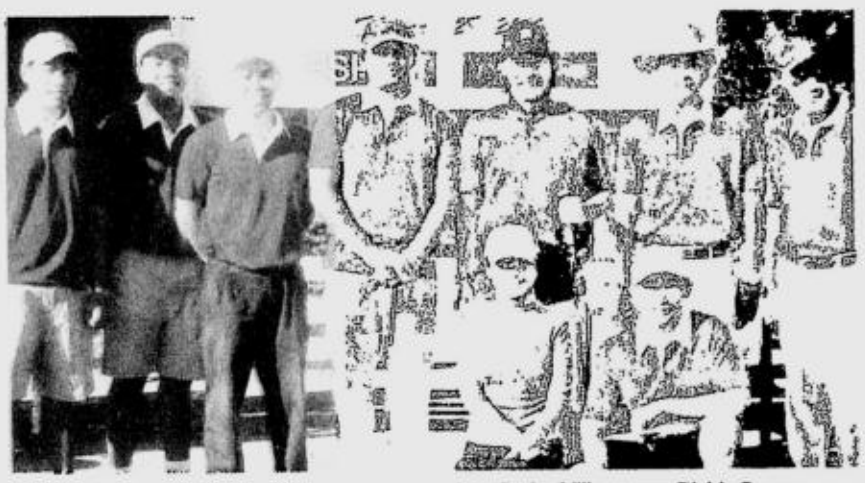
ALVIN Lim, Leo Po, Trim Tan, Ed Castro, Frederik Famm, Boy Claudio, Fritz Azanza, Joey Coronel and captain Ramon Brobio of Team Esprit

Inaugural cup

TEAM Esprit won the inaugural Richie Cup held recently at the exclusive Manila Golf and Country Club.

The event is an annual match-play tournament organized by Sid Castro to mark the birthday of Cinderella's Richie Coronel Santos.

The celebrator's closest friends and family were divided into two teams. Former world champions Ramon Brobio was captain of Team Esprit and Carito Villaroman was captain of Team U2.



MARK Coronel, Luigi Avancena, Dennis Littonjua, Carito Villaroman, Richie Santos, Arthur Coronel and Cecil Hechanova; (kneeling) Sid Castro and Stephen Sia of Team U2

Low-calorie food guide

Part 2

LAST week, in response to a letter-writer, this column started the lists of food choices that would make eating out less fattening.

By making lower calorie choices, you can eat out and still maintain your weight.

Nutritionist Joy Bauer's "The Complete Idiot's Guide to Eating Smart" shows how to dine out without guilt.

Here are more lists to help you make healthier choices:

WELL AND GOOD
Tina Juan

Japanese food

Lower-calorie items:
Miso soup
Steamed vegetables
Fish and vegetable sushi
Sashimi
Hijiki
Oshitashi
Yaki-udon
Yakitori
Su-udon
Sukiyaki
Nabemono
Yosenabe
Miso-nabe
Shabu-shabu
Sumashi wan
Chicken, fish, or beef teriyaki
Steamed rice
Fresh fruit
Higher-calorie items:
Vegetable or shrimp tempura
Tonkatsu
Fried dumplings
Fried bean curd
Oyako domburi
Chawan mush
Yo kan

Mexican food

Lower-calorie items:
Gazpacho
Corn tortillas with salsa
Ceviche
Chicken fajitas
Enchiladas
Camarones de hacha
Arroz con pollo
Cheeseless burritos
Grilled fish or chicken breast
Frijoles a la charra
Borracho beans and rice
Soft chicken taco
Chicken tostada
Salsa, pico de gallo and cilantro
Jalapeno peppers
Higher-calorie items:
Tortilla chips
Nachos with cheese
Flour tortillas
Chorizo
Carnitas
Refried beans
Quesadillas with cheese
Beef tacos
Burritos with cheese
Beef and cheese enchilada
Chimichangas
Sour cream and guacamole
Frozen margaritas and piña coladas

American food

Lower-calorie items:
Shrimp/seafood cocktails
Tossed salad with lite vinaigrette
Broth and vegetable-based soup
Turkey, roast beef and grilled chicken sandwiches
Broiled, blackened or grilled fish, chicken and lean meats
Plain hamburgers, turkey burgers and veggie burgers
Grilled chicken on top of salad
Grilled vegetable plates over rice
Chicken kabobs and rice
Baked potatoes (with dijon mustard, ketchup, marinara, salsa or small amounts of butter)
Pasta with tomato-based sauce
Steamed or lightly sauteed vegetables
Frozen yogurt, fruit ice or sherbet
Fresh fruit
Angel food cake
Higher-calorie items:
Creamy soups
Caesar salads
Salads with avocado, bacon and creamy dressings
Buffalo/chicken wings
Fried zucchini and mushrooms
Cheeseburgers
Fried fish or chicken nuggets
Grilled cheese sandwiches
Philadelphia cream steaks
Reuben sandwiches
Tuna melts
Tuna, egg or chicken salads
Fried chicken or fish
Hotdogs
French fries
Potato salads
Fruit pies, cookies and cakes
Creamy coffees
Ice cream sundaes

Filipino food

This list contains my personal suggestions for eating Pinoy-style.

Lower-calorie items:
Chicken *tinola*
Fish or shrimp *sinigang*
Grilled fish, seafood, chicken or pork
Steamed fish or seafood
Steamed or sauteed vegetables
Pancit
Steamed rice
Fresh *lumpia*
Halo-halo with ice only (no ice cream or evaporated milk)
Mais con yelo
Fresh fruits
Higher-calorie items:
Beef or pork *sinigang*
Bulalo
Fried rice
Fried *lumpia*
Fried fish, seafood, chicken or pork
Kare-kare
Crispy *pata* or *lechon kawali*
Lechon
Halo-halo with ice cream
Leche flan

Visit www.tinajuanfitness.info

EXERCISE OF THE WEEK

Side arm rise on stability ball

THIS exercise strengthens the front and sides of the shoulder. It also challenges the trunk muscles, which have to stabilize your body.

Equipment:
Stability ball (or chair/gym bench) and a pair of dumbbells

Exercise:
1. Sit on the ball with your feet shoulder-width apart and your arms at the side of your body.
2. Keeping the elbows bent, raise your arms sideways to shoulder height.
3. In the top position, your hands should be at the same level as your shoulders with the palms facing the floor.
4. Slowly lower back to starting position.

Performance tips:
1. Start the movement by contracting the muscles at the side of the shoulders instead of swinging the dumbbells.
2. Exhale as you lift the dumbbells; inhale as you bring them down.
3. Maintain good posture throughout the execution of the exercise.
4. Keep elbows bent to avoid stress in the elbow joint.
5. Avoid lifting the arms higher than shoulder level as you can damage nerves and ligaments in the shoulder joint.

Repetitions:
12-15 times.

ILLUSTRATION BY STEPH BRAVO

Children 'inherit' parents' eating habits

By Cathy S. Babao-Guballa
Contributor

What a child eats at breakfast has a great impact on how he does in school that day

THE PARENT'S influence on a child's nutrition could not be emphasized enough.

In a symposium on "Stress and Children's Nutrition" in Bangkok, Thailand, sponsored by Pharmaton, speakers from around the globe presented studies on the effects of stress on a child's eating habits.

A child's nutritional state is directly related to his/her physical and mental development and, clearly, younger children's eating patterns are strongly influenced by their family's habits.

All over Asia today there is a rise in the number of working mothers. Most children are left in the care of nannies or other relatives. Mornings are stressful times in many households where breakfast is, more often than not, rushed as the children set off for school.

Example

Often, parents themselves set the example of poor eating habits—a quick gulp of coffee and a slice of toast. Many families now rarely sit together to begin the day in

At the symposium, Oscar Sanchez-Guerrero, M.D., a child psychiatrist from Mexico, said stress was an unavoidable aspect of the human condition. "The way (of facing) stress makes the big difference in adaptation."

Chronic stress, Guerrero explained, diminished immunity from diseases and increased the risk of infections particularly in the upper respiratory pathways of children. This is probably the reason why during examination periods and other stressful times, children become more susceptible to coughs, colds and other respiratory infections.

"Illness is one of the most important stressors in children because their nutritional requirements are greater. For example, fever increases the metabolic rate by 13 percent for each (increase in temperature) over 37.5° Celsius," Guerrero explained.

He added that the immune system was also compromised. Guerrero said physiological processes were tightly interlinked to mental processes, and both contributed to a successful response to stress.

"Human beings learn to react to stress in a specific way even in childhood. How the mother, or the primary caregiver, models this for the child is of utmost importance. Learning is then intimately related to stress and to the way the child faces it or copes with it," he said.

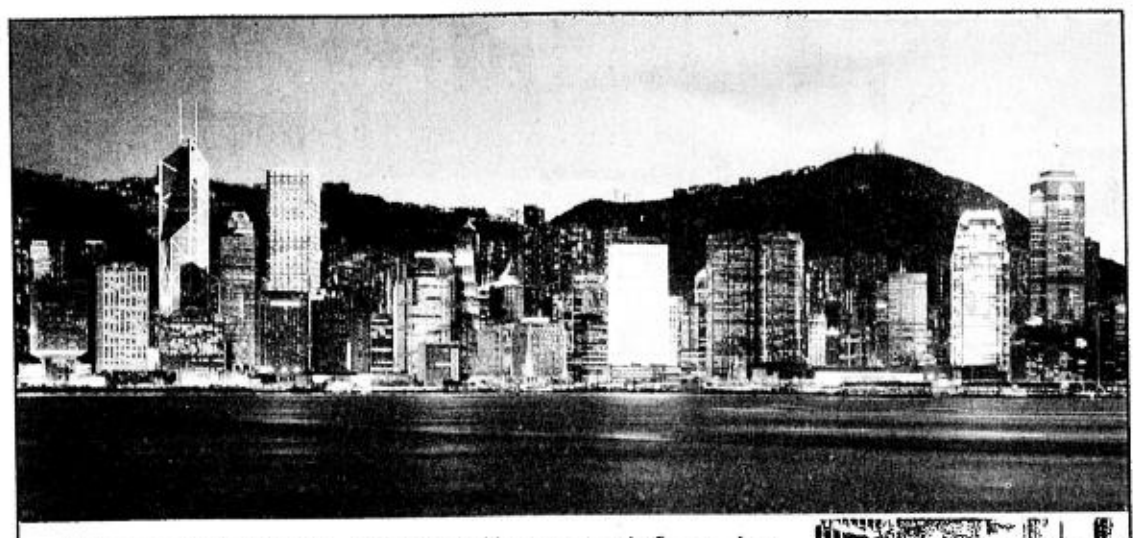
How a child begins his morning, specifically how he takes his first meal of the day, has a great impact on how he will function in school for the rest of the day.

Morning rituals

In a study on "Nutrition, Stress and Cognitive Function in School Children" conducted by Prof. Keith A. Wesnes of the Human Cognitive Neuroscience Unit of the Northumbria University in the United Kingdom, results of a test on a group of Andalucian children showed that a high frequency of stressors was associated with poorer ability to concentrate, poorer memory, longer retrieval from memory and longer cognitive processing time than a low frequency of stressors.

This means that parents, in order for a child to function better in school, have to ensure a relaxed and peaceful morning as much as possible from the moment a child wakes up until she/he leaves for school. Enough sleep and adequate time to go through the morning rituals of bathing, dressing and eating breakfast are essential

A STRESSED/D3



Discover the diversity and fun in
Hong Kong

There is no place like Hong Kong. Where else can you experience the distinctive blend of East and West, the rush as you indulge in shopping, or the unbelievable satisfaction from food? Explore the richness and diversity of Hong Kong's many interesting and amazing sights.

The first place on every visitor's "must do" list is Victoria Peak, where you can grasp the exhilarating sights of the Hong Kong skyline contrasted by peaceful green hillsides. A scenic trip on the Star Ferry or the historical Duk Ling Ride presents a memorable boat ride across one of the world's most photographed harbours.

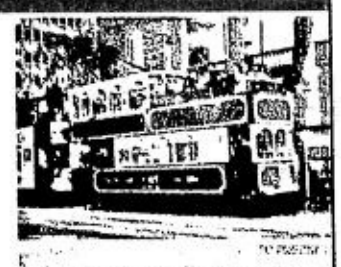
Immerse yourself in timeless heritage, culture and festivals. Visit the Man Mo Temple in Hollywood Road - Hong Kong's oldest Chinese Temple. Or seek enlightenment by visiting the Big Buddha, the world's tallest seated outdoor bronze Buddha located on Lantau Island.

Experience the shopping universe at the many department stores in Hong Kong, where you will find outlets of famous international and local brands. Looking for a different and lively shopping experience? There is always the Temple Street Night Market and Ladies' Market at Mongkok to satisfy any bargain hunters' desire.

Discover some of Hong Kong's best-kept secrets. Join the Land Between Tour and witness Hong Kong's endangered pink dolphins in their scenic natural habitat in the waters off Lantau Island. Enjoy basking under the sun at any of Hong Kong's famous beaches - Stanley Beach, Repulse Bay, or Clearwater Bay Beach. Satisfy your gastronomic desires at any of Lamma Island's seafood restaurants.

In Hong Kong, the possibilities are endless, the memories are timeless and the experiences are unique. Visit Hong Kong now and you'll definitely Live It and Love It!

For more information on Hong Kong please visit www.DiscoverHongKong.com



Transportation Adventure

Traveling around Hong Kong has never been so fun and easy with its various means of transportation.

Duk Ling Junk. Climb aboard an authentic Chinese sailing junk that was originally owned and sailed by fishermen.

Star Ferry. A must for every visitor. The Star Ferry offers spectacular views of Victoria Harbour, Hong Kong Island and the Kowloon Peninsula.

Trams. One of the classic icons of Hong Kong are the old street trams which provide an old-fashioned travel experience. It is also the only double-decker tram fleet operating in the world.

Mass Transit Railway (MTR). One of the easiest and fastest ways to go around Hong Kong is via the MTR. It connects the urban areas in Kowloon, most of Hong Kong Island and Lantau Island.

Open-Top Buses. A great way to see Central Districts' finest architecture is aboard the double-decker open-top buses running between the Star Ferry Piers in Central to the Peak Tram Lower Terminus.

Helicopter Tours. Soar into the sky and see Hong Kong from a different perspective by taking a helicopter tour.

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Approved applications during the promo period will also earn raffle entries. For application and inquiries, call BPI Express Phone 89-100, visit any BPI or BPI Family Bank branch or Express Banking Center or log on to www.bpiexpressonline.com.

Promo period: November 15, 2004-April 30, 2005. See flyers for details. Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 3121, Series of 2004

All approved BPI Edge/Mini Edge applications including BPI Edge/Mini Edge applications submitted by existing active BPI cardholders, from March 15 to May 15, 2005 will get a chance to win 1 of 10 Siemens SF65 mobile phones with a 1.3 megapixel SXGA camera!

See flyers for details Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 0598, Series of 2005

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MUTTS BY PATRICK McDONNELL

ATOMO AND WEBOY BY LYRA GARCELLANO

DIVINE COMEDY BY STEVEN PABALINAS

HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCIS DRAKE

YOU BORN TODAY: You have a lot of idealism, which, ironically, can make you appear jaded at times. Home and family mean a lot to you. You're playful, but you're also trustworthy and loyal. You have a great sense of humor and can defi-nitely laugh at yourself. Major changes take place this year, perhaps as significant as in 1996. Birthdate of: Jennifer Capriati, tennis player; Elle Macpherson, supermodel; Eric Idle, comedian/actor.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): Your communication skills are excellent today. You find it easy to be diplomatic and charming with everyone. Plan to buy wardrobe items tomorrow.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): You will appreciate time spent by yourself. Solitude in beautiful surroundings will benefit you now. Try to get a bit of privacy somewhere if you can.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): This is an excellent day to schmooze with others! You genuinely enjoy their company; they genuinely enjoy yours. Artistic and creative friends are good for you now.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): Your ability to deal with bosses, parents, teachers and authority figures is excellent today. Others think you're charming and capable! Just let them go on thinking this. (You win!)

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): Do anything that you can to expand your world right now. Visit places you've never been to before. Go to new shops, libraries, restaurants, parks—whatever.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): You have the energy and drive now to get a lot done today. Tackle red-tape details connected with insurance, debt, taxes and shared property. Just plow through this stuff.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): Relations with others—especially romantic relationships—are quite lovely this week. Patch up misunderstandings today. Others are receptive to you right now. You can make great headway.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): Although there might be tension at home or in the workplace, people are very supportive of you now. Co-workers are helpful. Go where there is the least resistance,

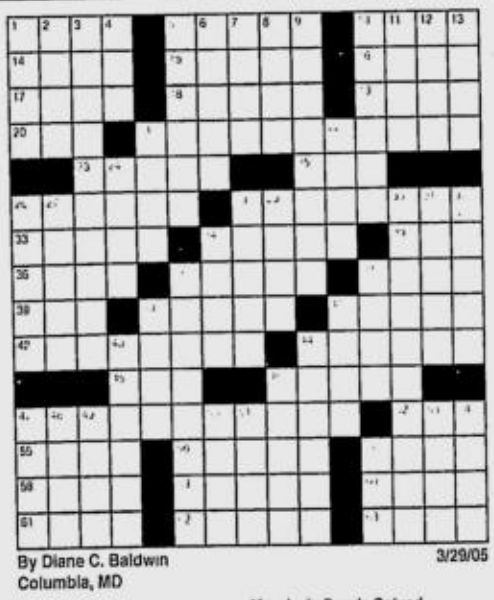
SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): This is a wonderful time for romance for your sign. Similarly, your creative vibes are strong! Enjoy artistic activities, arts and crafts, vacations and love affairs!

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): This is a good day to do small repairs at home and putter around in some fashion to make where you live look more beautiful. Conversations with family members are warm and friendly.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): It's important to get more physical exercise. Try to do that today. You have a lot of energy building up in you right now, and it needs someplace to go!

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): You want to boost your earnings or figure out a way to make more money. You're also in the mood to shop. Hot tip: Wait until tomorrow to do these things.

DAILY CROSSWORD



By Diane C. Baldwin
Columbia, MD
3/29/05

ACROSS
1 Hand-holders?
5 Royal headband
10 Unscathed
14 Man from Tarsus
15 Pooped out
16 Goose's gullet
17 500-mile race
18 Element
19 Vague state of mind
20 Billboard blurbs
21 Coastal collector
23 Scottish landowner
25 Batman and Robin, e.g.
26 Tiresome routines
28 Covers for
33 Mouths off
34 Holy terrors
35 Track circuit
36 Slight advantage
37 Stocking shade
38 Novelist Morrison
39 Draw
40 Verne of sci-fi
41 Police emblem
42 Plane flaps
44 Man from Manaus
45 Snaggler's prey
46 Tall military hat
47 Card cheat
52 High spirits
55 Fix a draft
56 Brownish pigment
57 Gem mined in Australia
58 Tumbled
59 Stacked up
60 Cozumel cash
61 Bit of gossip
62 Dance moves
63 Small deck member

DOWN
1 Gobi Desert location
2 "Atlas Shrugged" author
3 Malicious campaigner
4 Stallone, to friends
5 Trims to a point
6 Homer classic
7 Actor Guinness
8 Full-bodied
9 Short account
10 Jerk
11 U.A.E. part
12 Disconcert
13 Washstand item
21 Tenders an offer
22 Inning enders
24 Pot builder
26 Garbo of "Queen Christina"
27 Diameter halves
28 Is a busybody
29 Past of riches?
30 Clumsy bumpkin
31 Ballroom dance
32 Peeping Tom
34 Ring signal
37 Crescendos
38 Armored vehicle
40 Young kangaroo
41 Cartoon Yogi
43 State of health
44 Archaeological finds
46 Slumber
47 Adroit
48 Mental plan
49 Little streamlet
50 Discharge
51 Up to the job
53 Life of Riley
54 Gambit
57 ___ out (resign)

Monday's Puzzle Solved

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GASFAR
fuel saving tips
KEEP SPEED DOWN AND DRIVE AT STEADY SPEEDS
Tests conducted with popular cars have indicated a 25% improvement in fuel economy when speeds are reduced from 120 to 80 kph.

MIKROKOSMOS BY JOMIKE TEJIDO

BEN BY DANIEL SHELTON

KIKO MACHINE BY MANIX ABRERA

LOVEKNOTS BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO

TULDOK BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING

Vatican objection only boosts sales of 'Da Vinci Code'

INNER AWARENESS

Jaime T. Licauco

Brown should feel very happy at this development rather than try to defend his book against attacks

ACCORDING to a Reuters' news item published in another newspaper, "The Catholic Church has come out swinging against 'The Da Vinci Code,' dismissing as a collection of shameful unfounded lies the worldwide best-seller about the Vatican suppressing the 'truth' that Jesus had a child."

Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone, former deputy head of the Vatican Pontifical Council for the Doctrine of the Faith, was quoted as telling the people not to read or buy the book. The cardinal said, "There is a very real risk that many people who read it will believe that the fables it contains are true."

This warning by the good cardinal against Dan Brown's book is both ill-advised and futile for the following reasons:

First, the warning comes too late, as the news item clearly pointed out. The novel has become a publishing sensation.

Doubleday publisher said 25 million copies of the book had been printed in 44 languages since it was published in 2003. And it inspired about a dozen other books. To top it all, a movie based on the book is being made starring Tom Hanks and directed by Ron Howard. This will surely create more demand for the book.

Second, the more the Vatican tries to discourage people from reading the book, the more they will be curious about it. Those who have never heard of the book will now want to know what the fuss is all about.

If the Vatican is so much against it, there must be something interesting contained in it.

Look what happened to D.H. Lawrence's classic erotic book, "Lady Chatterley's Lover." When the Vatican put the novel in its Index of Forbidden Books, its sales shot up.

Third, we are living in an information age where everything and anything, from the profound to the profane, can be accessed through the Internet. There is no way the church can stop the free flow of information, unlike in the Middle Ages when only the church had access to books and other information. At that time, the church succeeded in suppressing information contrary to its beliefs.

An attempt to do the same is now sure to backfire. Any priest who thinks he can still control people's minds is asleep in a medieval dream world.

Apparently there are church officials who believe this is still the 13th or 14th century, during which the church relentlessly and mercilessly tortured and persecuted people whose opinions and beliefs differed from their official stand. So-called heretics and witches were tried by the mindless Inquisition courts and hundreds of thousands were burned at the stakes, including Joan of Arc.

The current attempt by the Vatican to suppress "The Da Vinci Code," or at least discourage people from reading it, will ensure greater sales and demand for it. Dan Brown should thank the Catholic hierarchy for this. He should feel very happy at this development rather than try to defend his book against attacks.

The church has always been anti-intellectual. It stifles dissent and intellectual debate on religious issues and doctrines. It only encourages total and blind acceptance of its pronouncements and considers as heretics anybody who differs from its official stand.

There was a time when the works of such thinkers as John Locke, Jean Paul Sartre, Voltaire and even scientist Blaise Pascal were included in the Index of Forbidden Books.

In the Philippines, a former congressman challenged recently a Catholic bishop to a public debate on pending bills on population. The bishop, expectedly, declined.

Bishops and priests are not used to being questioned about their pronouncements, no matter how outdated, erroneous or incredible they are. They are used to having the faithful accept them blindly. When they will wake up to the reality of the 21st-century information explosion is anybody's guess.

Address letters to this column to Prince Plaza I, 106 Legazpi St., Legazpi Village, Makati City. Call 8107245 or 8926806 for information on seminars I conduct. E-mail jlicauco@edsamail.com.ph. Visit my website at http://jlicauco.shorturl.com. Listen to my dzMM radio program 7-8 p.m. every Sunday.

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Take Charge Doc!

How do we protect ourselves from rabies?

Approximately 300-600 Filipinos die of rabies every year. Indeed, rabies is a fatal disease particularly in developing countries where both animal immunization and stray control measures are inadequate. In view of the 100% case fatality of human rabies, the prevention of rabies infection after exposure through vaccination is of most utmost importance. However, we may also p rotect ourselves from rabies infection by means of pre-exposure immunization. Prophyluxis immunization through Purified Duck Embryo or Chick Embryo Cell Vaccine is recommended for individuals at high risk of exposure to rabies such as personnel in rabies diagnostic laboratories, veterinarians, animal handlers and other directly involved in rabies control. Certain medications are not allowed use during the immunization period because they interfere with the antibody response to vaccine.

Persons who work in high risk areas should undergo periodic measurement of antibodies and a booster dose is recommended for those with low rabies antibody levels in blood, or one booster dose should be given every two or three years depending on risk of work related exposure. Persons that are at a very low risk of exposure may elect not to receive routine booster doses but only to receive active immunization with any substantive exposure.

Dr. Ruel S. Landicho answers this week's feature question on the prophylaxis for rabies. Doc Ruel, as he is commonly addressed by his patients, is our accredited medical service provider at the Our Lady of Caysasay Hospital in Lemery, Batangas. The young doctor specializes in Internal Medicine and has been in this field for over seven years now. He is a graduate of Medicine from the Manila Central University and in 1997, finished his residency at the Jose R. Reyes Memorial Medical Center. He spends most of his free time with his loving wife, Romina and their son, Ryan. Medicard members may seek the consultation services of Dr. Ruel Landicho at Room 506, Monday to Saturday, from 8 AM until 12 noon.

MEDICard's Medical Director, Dr. Nicky Montoya answers questions on health through the assistance and expertise of MEDICard's network of accredited specialists. Write to Dr. Nicky or E-mail him at inquiry@medicardphils.com for your inquiries on health matters.

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Children inherit...

From page D1

in preparing the child for his/her day in school.

Wesnes also reported on his study about the role of breakfast in attention and memory. The Farmhouse Breakfast Week study, a nationwide study conducted in the UK in 2004, confirmed the findings of Wesnes' earlier research on Andalucian children.

"Children concentrate better and learn more if they have breakfast. The attention span develops and improves dramatically from 6-12 years of age, which is a crucial time to maintain the health of children."

Most stressful

Unfortunately, this is also the age when children are most stressed and rushed each day as they prepare for school. The elementary school years are usually the years when children are most difficult to feed in the mornings. As the studies have shown, such behavior has a negative impact on their physical development and affects their work in school. Even more worrisome is a child who hardly takes anything for breakfast and is, at the same time, the recipient of stress from his parents and caregivers.

The symposium underscored that more than anyone else, parents were their children's role models in coping with the different stressors in their environment.

Mealtimes should be pleasant times and could be used as a time to bond with children and to catch up on what was going on in their lives.

Parents should make the moments with their children count, using them as occasions to instill good eating habits that will be with them through life.

Vitamins are essential in filling the gaps in their nutrition and diet. Stress-free mornings and a hearty breakfast are therefore very important in producing a happy and healthy child.

Dark patches may be more than sunburn

MEGA We Care's Pynocare is an oral capsule to be taken twice a day to block the excess production of melanocytes that cause melasma.

Melasma is a skin disorder characterized by the discoloration of certain parts of the face, and is especially common among women who live in tropical climates like Asians.

Unlike sunburn that may cause redness of the whole face, dark patches caused by melasma occur only in certain areas, like the cheeks, forehead, upper lip, nose bridge and jaw line.

Sunburn also disappears in one to two months. Melasma, on the other hand, develops over a long period of time—from three to four years. Sunburn also disappears and normal skin color returns after a month or two, but dark patches due to melasma remain for a long time.

But like sunburn, melasma is caused by over-exposure to the hot sun. In the Philippines, however, Sachin Pagey, country manager of Mega Products Unlimited Philippines, says dermatologists claim the use of certain cosmetics or very cheap astringents also cause the problem.

Mega Products Unlimited Philippines is the Philippine branch of Mega We Care, a Thailand-based healthcare company.

Patients suffering from melasma usually undergo laser treatment or diamond peeling. But Pagey says they do not address the root cause and, hence, the chances of recurrence are high.

Mega We Care's own research has found that melasma is now prevalent among 40 percent of women in Southeast Asia.

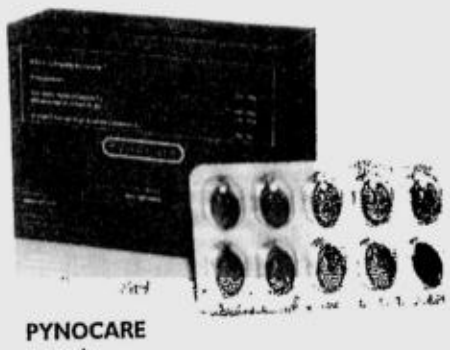
The capsule Pynocare was reported to have be successful in over 200,000 cases of women with melasma in countries like Thailand, Singapore, and Indonesia.

Apart from combating melasma at its roots and giving protection against free radicals (damaging substances caused by disease, pollution, etc.) that trigger its appearance, Pynocare also repairs and strengthens the skin. It soothes inflammation, strengthens skin capillaries, and improves microcirculation.

One Pynocare capsule consists of procyanidin, a French maritime pine bark Extract and one of the active compounds of Pycnogenol, a potent anti-oxidant; ascorbic acid or Vitamin C; Vitamin A; and Vitamin E. The overall combination of these ingredients reportedly make Pynocare 50 times more potent than Vitamin C and 20 times more potent than Vitamin E. Another substance, Actisome, ensures better absorption.

A clinical study showed Pynocare had an 85-percent efficacy in reducing the size and intensity of melasma in eight weeks. No side effects were observed.

Call 8942830 loc. 403.



PYNOCARE
capsule

By: Caitlyn T. Ellis

He loves me, but he marries men@t!

You love him, he loves you (or at least that's what he says). That's all that matters right? Wrong! In the real world, it's possible that the man you love and who professes to love you back might not want to marry you eventually. This may come as a shock to your little ol' smitten heart: there are men who think that there are "some girls you marry and some you love".

So what do you do when you find yourself in such a situation? Since we are so past the era of *pikot*, you need to adapt a more modern strategy. To get him to blurt out your coveted marriage proposal, you should approach everything like a business proposition. And like any business dealing, what you need is a plan.

The five-point plan to get a PROPOSAL:

#1 ASSESS THE SITUATION

Are you sure he doesn't want to marry you? Or maybe he merely feels he's not yet ready to settle down (if at all)? Maybe he's just afraid of commitment and responsibility at this time. Perhaps he's not the marrying type or worse, that you're - GASP! - simply not wife material. Whatever the reason, you should try to find out as much as you can so you can better determine your tactics.

#2 DO YOUR RESEARCH

Did he meet another girl whom he might think is more deserving to use his surname? Or was he already involved with somebody else before you entered the picture? Know the real score - in case you need to take on a more competitive stance.

Is his family's standing a factor? You know, the you-and-me-against-the-world bit does not fare as well as it used to. Your man might feel that your social statures don't match - it's up to you to prove to him that it's a manageable issue.

#3 SELL YOUR GOODS

Your GOOD side, that is. Give him your full attention but don't be too all over him. Cook for him, take care of him when he gets sick. Short of kissing babies like a politician, show him that you'd not only make a perfect wife but a perfect mother as well. Interact with his younger siblings or relatives and give due respect to his parents.

#4 NEGOTIATE

They say desperate situations call for drastic measures. Here's what you can (pretend to) do. Threaten him with your life. Threaten his life. Or threaten the life of your unborn baby (actual pregnancy not a prerequisite, but an intimate relationship is).

When all of the above fails, strike at his other vulnerable spots. However, be careful that in your attempts in bargaining with him you won't look like a madwoman or else you'll just succeed in driving him further away.

#5 APPLY LEARNINGS

If you've done all you can and still haven't brought him down on his knees - okay, maybe on just one bended knee and with a ring in his hand - be a sport and accept defeat. It's not sour graping on your part to admit that maybe it's not worth fighting for or that it might have not worked out well in the end.

For previous chapters & clues, log on to www.inquestor.com

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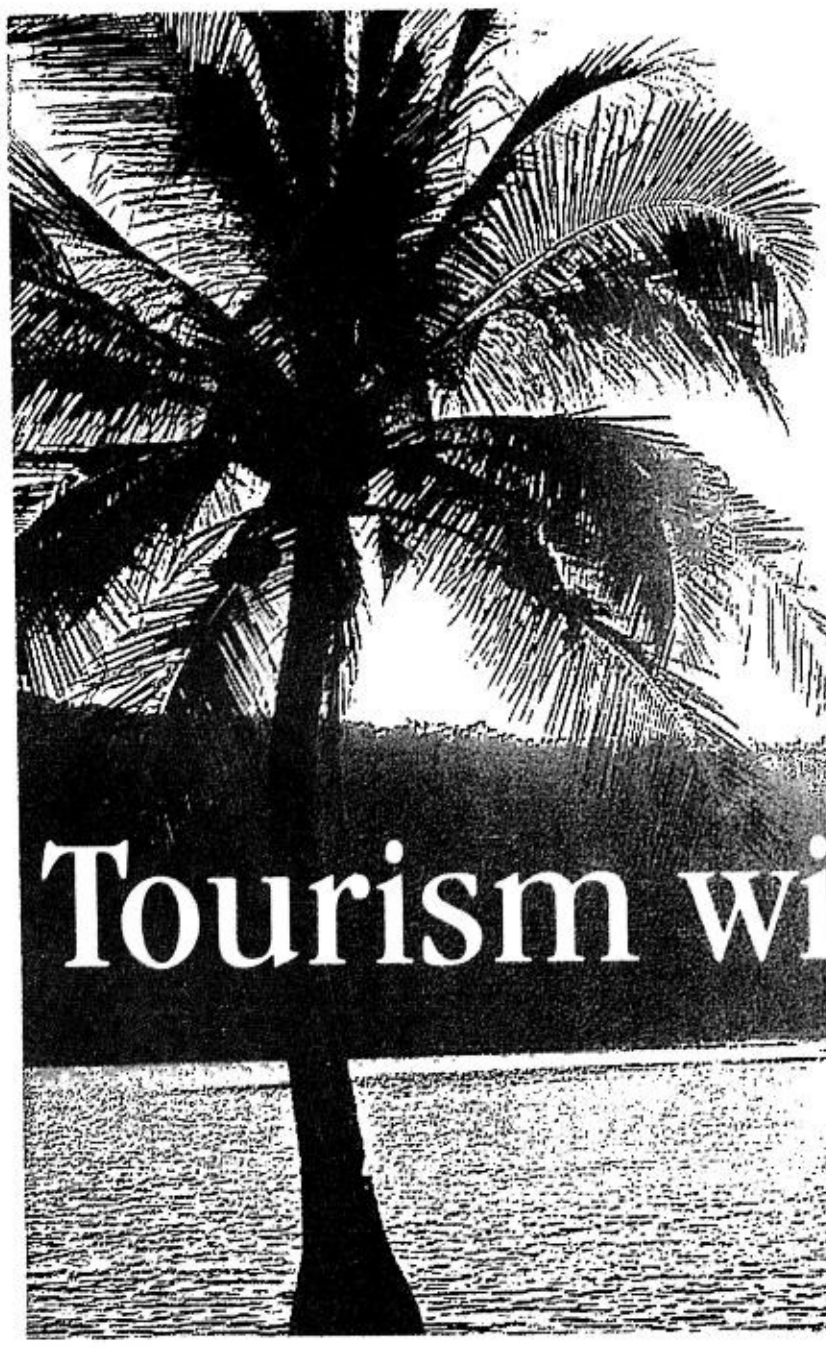
CAVITE Gov. Ireneo "Ayong" Maliksi and DENR Usec. Manny de Castro take turns fishing out garbage from the sea.

Gerry Reyes (second from left), director of International Marine Alliance, with environment advocate Roy Alvarez and Boy Scouts



DIVERS struggle with dead seaweeds washed ashore.

Tourism with a conscience

By Constantino C. Tejero

PEOPLE who have seen on television that telecommunications commercial of Sharon Cuneta on a windy balcony overlooking the sea have been wondering where in the world that was shot. Some thought it was in a foreign land, and many were surprised when told it was shot in Cavite.

In actuality, the setting is not a house but a pavilion at a bend on a ridge surrounded by the sea, a sort of isthmus on a bay in Ternate, Cavite—90 km south of Manila and just 90 minutes drive away.

It is part of Cala Buena, formerly known as Caylabne Resort, and Marbella even earlier when it was the playground of the Marcoses and their jet-set friends. The spectacular vista of a cove set between the mountains and the sea and surrounded by virgin rainforests has remained as it was the first time the jeweled set cast eyes on it.

It's not just the view, however, that's extraordinary about the place. More importantly, it leads the way to an ecological corridor.

Neighbor to national parks known for their exceptional biodiversity, the place is a marine and forest sanctuary—home to the Maragondon Monkey and 77 species of birds, including the Philippine Eagle.

On learning this, one rethinks the significance of the place, seeing it as more than just a place for leisure. One's first impulse is to blurt out: By all means, preserve and protect this stretch of land and sea!

And that's exactly what the new owners of the 160-ha property have been trying to do. In January, they started working with the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) to have part of the area declared a mangrove reserve.

MARINES collect trash.

Breeding ground

About a kilometer away from the beach is the residential estate Las Casas de Cala Buena, dotted by 55 Southern Mediterranean-style villas in the earth tones and clean lines of Tuscan architecture. Here, by a river opening out to the bay, the mangroves thrive.

This mangrove area serves as breeding ground for the diverse marine life on Caylabne Bay. It is "a rare site in the fast-developing coastal landscape of Philippine tourist destinations today."

In January, the resort hosted Miriam College students researching the taxonomy and morphology of mangrove species. It is also working with De La Salle University Dasmariñas for continued research.

A MARINE cleans the pier.

The new owners of the 160-hectare Cala Buena are determined to preserve the area's natural beauty

In February, senior officers of the United Nations Development Program's Partnerships in Environmental Management for the Seas of East Asia visited and were said to be surprised at the level of preservation of the mangroves.

Cala Buena recently celebrated Preservation Day, the first of what would become an annual event to highlight the resort's commitment to protect and preserve the environment. It invited people for a cleanup of that part of the Cavite-Batangas coastline—the beach, the pier, underwater areas at least 30 ft deep.

In the morning of March 5, a convoy of some 15 vans decked with balloons started a caravan from Makati all the way to Ternate, to promote "awareness and action toward preserving the environment."

Among the guests were Cavite Gov. Ireneo Maliksi, Environment Undersecretary Armando de Castro, International Marine Alliance director Gerry Reyes, environment advocate Roy Alvarez, and representatives of print and broadcast media.

Surreal scene

In early afternoon, after a briefing, distribution of cleanup kits, and speeches on responsible solid-waste management and the importance of a clean, healthy, sustainable environment, the drive began.

Registered participants reached 154, including the Philippine Marines, Boy Scouts of the Philippines, Ayala Mountaineering Group, Cavite Volunteers Group and individual divers.

The youngest participants were a 13-year-old Boy Scout and a 6-year-old girl, Yazi Velasco. The oldest were a 67-year-old Marine and a 46-year-old woman.

Volunteers spent about five hours collecting garbage in the vicinity. Some struggled with the masses of dead seaweeds washed ashore. Others turned up with weird items such as a fisherman's improvised buoy.

Divers described the scene underwater as a surreal sight of transparent plastic sheets and Styrofoam waving and undulating in the current like living creatures.

The volume of trash recovered weighed about 1,200 lbs, or 545 kg. And to think they consisted mainly of lightweight materials like plastic and Styrofoam.

The garbage was classified and put in sacks. Most of the items collected were meal boxes from fast-food restaurants.

The most unusual, found by Marines, were two tiny bottles with notes inside. The messages were supposed to be read in the evening during the program in the garden. But it started to rain, and somebody took the bottles as everyone scrambled for cover to Marina Bar.

One wouldn't be surprised if they were farewell notes to the Late Great Planet Earth.

DIVERS prepare their gear.

MARINES and civilians register for the cleanup drive.

GOV. AYONG Maliksi hobnobs with Boy Scouts.

■ World / A8
Judge allows hearing of 5 past abuse claims against Jacko

■ News / A2
Solon, employees cool to 4-day workweek

■ 2bU! / G2
What to do after graduation: Prepare for job-hunting

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One hot showdown between Toyota and General Motors

Tanong ng Bayan / A13
Bagong graduates: Maganda ba ang hinaharap?

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Police colonel, politician eyed in Esperat murder

By Aquiles Z. Zonio, Edwin O. Fernandez and Armand N. Nocum

COTABATO CITY—Police said yesterday they would question a senior officer and his son in connection with the slaying of columnist Marlene Esperat, the latest in a growing list of murdered Filipino journalists.

POLICE/ A21

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US life-and-death case: Woman hangs on to life

PINELLAS PARK, Florida—In what has been described as America's most significant life-and-death case in years, a severely brain-damaged woman drew closer to death at a hospice on Monday, her

US/ A22

SCHIAVO

FPJ poll protest junked

SC says Susan can't sub for him

By Armand N. Nocum and Fe Zamora

"THE MOVING Finger writes; and, having writ, moves on: nor all your Piety nor Wit shall lure it back to cancel half a line, nor all your Tears wash out a Word of it."

With these words from Omar Khayyam's "The Rubaiyat" serving as the opening statement in its 14-page resolution, the Supreme Court yesterday unanimously threw out the petition of Susan Roces to substitute for her late husband, Fernando Poe Jr., and in the process junked the election protest filed by the actor against President Macapagal-Arroyo.

In a decision written by Associate Justice Leonardo A. Quisumbing, the 15-member high court sitting as the Presidential Electoral Tribunal (PET) dismissed Poe's case against Ms Arroyo "on the ground that no real party in interest has come forward within the period allowed by law, to intervene in this case or be substituted for the deceased protestant."

The high court said Poe's widow, actress Susan Roces (Jesusa Sonora Poe in real life), was not "the party who would be benefited or injured by the judgment, and the party who is entitled to avail of the suit."

Thus, it said, Roces' petition to intervene and substitute for her husband following his death on Dec. 14, 2004, which she filed on Jan. 10, was "denied for lack of merit."

Roces' lawyer Sixto Brillantes

FPJ POLL/ A21

WAVE OF PANIC AFTER SUMATRA QUAKE

REMAINS to be seen of the city center of Nias off the coast of Sumatra after an earthquake, one of the eight biggest since 1900, rumbled through the surfing island paradise shortly before midnight Monday. Rough estimates of the death toll range between 200 and 2,000 persons. AP

Massive earthquake triggers fears of another tsunami

BANDA ACEH, Indonesia—A potent 8.7-magnitude earthquake hammered Indonesia's west coast, burying victims in collapsed homes and sparking panic across Indian Ocean countries still traumatized by the December tsunami disaster. Death toll estimates varied widely, from about 200 to 2,000.

Fears of a second tsunami raced across the region and then faded Tuesday when no killer waves appeared in the hours after the overnight quake.

Waves of up to three meters surged into Indonesian coastlines, but damage from the waters appeared to have been small.

Police, soldiers, monks, fishermen and residents of coastal areas across the Indian Ocean used megaphones, radio, telephones and temple bells to warn of the possibility of another tsunami.

Well before dawn, Thailand, Sri Lanka and India—where coastal residents had fled to high ground—canceled the alerts.

"The system is working far better this time," said Jan Egeland, the United Nations emergency relief coordinator.

But the force of the temblor brought down 70 percent of the buildings in the Indonesian paradise island of Nias, officials said.

The earthquake occurred along the same tectonic fault line as the massive 9.0-magnitude temblor that caused the Dec. 26 tsunami, which killed about 174,000 people.

Philippine officials, as late as yesterday afternoon, had yet to

MASSIVE/ A22

Surprise! US diplomat subjected to body search

By Nikko Dizon

WE'RE not mad; we just got even.

A top-ranking American diplomat made no protest yesterday morning when airport security personnel frisked him as soon as he stepped into the presidential lounge of the Ninoy Aquino International Airport (Naia) Centennial Terminal.

Ambassador Christopher Hill, the newly appointed assistant secretary of state for East Asian and Pacific Affairs, looked surprised but smiled and raised his arms as he was scanned with a metal detector and subjected to a body check.

During Holy Week, the Philippines formally protested the alleged harassment of Sen. Luisa Ejercito Estrada at the San Francisco International Airport on March 20.

The senator complained that she was detained for one-and-a-half hours at the airport and

SURPRISE!/ A21

TIT-FOR-TAT FOR LOI? Assistant State Secretary for East Asian and Pacific Affairs Christopher Hill is frisked by security men at the Naia.

VAT BATTLE ROYAL

Drilon upbeat on Senate OK

By Juliet Labog-Javellana

SENATE President Franklin Drilon yesterday expressed optimism the Senate would pass the value-added tax (VAT) reform measure during the three-day special session which begins today, but said senators would go against the proposal to raise the VAT rate from 10 to 12 percent.

Senate Minority Leader Aquilino Pimentel Jr. said Malacañang was dreaming when it said that the measure would be approved during the special session. Sen. Joker Arroyo echoed Pimentel's position, saying a "battle royal" was sure to arise over the proposal to lift the exemption from the VAT of the power sector.

Drilon confirmed Sen. Ralph Recto's statement that the senators were unanimous about upholding the Senate ways and means committee report retaining the present VAT rate of 10 percent.

"There are no views expressed to the contrary except for one or two senators, who have made public statements. But I think the majority of the senators would adopt the "no to a two-percentage point increase [position]," Drilon said at a breakfast forum of the Foreign Corre-

DRILON/ A6

Bishops press gov't to resolve Luisita killings

By Christian V. Esguerra

CLOSE on the heels of the warning of one of its members that the labor dispute at Hacienda Luisita was turning into a "social conflagration," the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines yesterday issued an equally scathing pastoral letter further pressuring the government to resolve the killings of three supporters of the striking workers at the sugar estate.

The killings "call for immediate govern-

BISHOPS/ A21

'Twas free, says Mike A lawyer

By Tarra V. Quismundo and Philip C. Tubeza

THE OPULENT suite was for free.

This was First Gentleman Jose Miguel Arroyo's defense to the "insinuation" that he had spent P1 million a night for a plush Las Vegas hotel room.

'TWAS/ A6

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Extreme Northern Luzon will have mostly skies with scattered rainshowers while Mindanao will experience mostly cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and thunderstorms. The rest of the country will be partly cloudy to at times cloudy with isolated rainshowers and thunderstorms.

COMPILED BY CHONA GALANO, PDI RESEARCH/03/29/05

Metro Manila	Partly Cloudy	Iloilo/Bacolod	Partly Cloudy
Baguio	Partly Cloudy	Roxas	Partly Cloudy
Tuguegarao	Cloudy with Rains	Cebu	Partly Cloudy
Laoag	Cloudy with Rains	Tacloban	Partly Cloudy
Clark Zone	Partly Cloudy	Gen. Santos	Cloudy with Rains
Tagaytay	Partly Cloudy	Zamboanga	Cloudy with Rains
Legazpi	Partly Cloudy	Cagayan de Oro	Cloudy with Rains
Calapan	Partly Cloudy	Davao	Cloudy with Rains

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NO REASON TO BE ECSTATIC

Workers cool to 4-day workweek

By TJ Burgonio, Alcuin Papa, Jerome Aning and Philip C. Tubeza

MALACAÑANG'S proposal for a four-day workweek would not save as much energy, according to a solon while government employees are not exactly ecstatic over the prospect of less working days.

Sen. Ralph Recto said yesterday that instead of cutting the number of working days a week, the government would save more by strictly giving gas rations only to government officials.

Recto, chair of the Senate committee on ways and means, said the government would generate more savings if it conserves energy, say gasoline, all year-round rather than just during the summer months.

The government, he said, could achieve this by providing gas and oil rations as well as repair and maintenance services only to government-owned vehicles.

"A no-nonsense implementation of this rule will stop the wanton distribution of government-paid 'gas coupons' to privately owned cars," Recto said in a statement.

Recto estimated that some P3.2 billion was allotted this year for the gas, oil and lubricants of the government's 58,142 vehicles, fleet of coastal patrol boats and 117 operational aircraft.

Energy officials expect the four-day workweek to generate savings of at least P114 million.

Under the scheme, affected government line agency employees are directed to render 10 hours of service per day from Monday to Thursday from 7:30 a.m. up to 5: 30 p.m.

But employees of the Department of Education (DepEd) are cool to the idea of a four-day workweek, saying the department's services will be affected.

DepEd-National Employees Union president Domingo Alidon said some of the employees, particularly in divisions who transact business with the public, are not in favor of Malacañang's scheme.

Alidon explained that employees working in these "frontlines" might not deliver quality services to the public because they are required to report at 7:00 in the morning and work until 6:00 in the evening.

He added that employees with "flexi-time" schedules would also be affected by the four-day workweek.

Labor Secretary Patricia Sto. Tomas, however, thinks that government employees should be ecstatic instead of opposing the four-day work week. "If I we're them, I'd be ecstatic," she said.

Sto. Tomas said that government employees should no longer demand overtime pay for the extra two hours of works since they would get an extra day off.

"This is forced overtime and is illegal and punishable by law," said Leody de Guzman, secretary general of the Bukluran ng Manggagawang Pilipino.

Sto. Tomas said the scheme would enhance productivity.

However, Rep. Renato Magtubo of Partido Manggagawa said it would lead instead to a more inefficient delivery of services.

The Trade Union Congress of the Philippines also cautioned the government against applying the four-day work week to the private sector.

"TUCP will oppose the proposal if it will result in any diminution in wages and benefits," said the group's spokesman Alex Aguilar.

The Employees Confederation of the Philippines earlier supported the scheme but its president Rene Soriano wants the Labor Code amended to avoid legal difficulties in case of labor cases.

But administration congressmen yesterday said that amending the Labor Code was unnecessary.

Reps. Edwin Uy (Lakas, Isabela), chair of the committee on bases conversion, and Judy Syjuco (Iloilo) said the proposal was unnecessary since the work scheme would only apply for two months.

In Negros Occidental, officials are uncertain whether the scheme would be ideal for the provinces.

Rafael Coscolluela, presidential adviser for Western Visayas, said such a scheme would be ideal only for highly urbanized areas like Metro Manila since small cities and towns have very minimal consumption of gasoline and electricity.

But the scheme is being supported by the Bulacan Mayors League.

Guiguinto Mayor Ambrocio Cruz, the league's president, said the shortened work week would give government employees a healthier life as work-related stress would be reduced. *With reports from Carla P. Gomez, PDI Visayas Bureau and Carmela Reyes, PDI Central Luzon Desk*

LAND REFORM IN NEGROS

High court rebuffs landowner anew

By Blanche S. Rivera

THE SUPREME Court has paved the way for the installation of more than 200 farmer beneficiaries in one of the biggest sugar plantations in Negros Occidental almost 10 years after the government awarded the land to its farmers.

The high court denied with finality the motion for reconsideration filed by Roberto Cuenca, owner of the 446-hectare Hacienda Velez-Malaga in La Castillana in Negros that was covered by the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program in 1996.

Cuenca appealed the Supreme Court's Sept. 23, 2004 decision saying that lower courts had no authority to hear and try agrarian reform cases.

"It appears to the Court that the motion merely reiterates the same arguments earlier raised and does not present any substantial reason not previously invoked nor any matter not already considered or passed upon by the Court," the one-page decision, promulgated on Jan. 19 but received by the DLR only last week, said.

Cuenca has lodged complaints and had managed to secure a temporary restraining order from a regional trial court in La Carlota City to stop farmers who have received a certificate of land ownership award from taking over the land.

"This is a landmark decision. It will set a precedent for the other haciendas and the lower courts not to meddle in the implementation of the CARP," Task Force Mapalad spokesperson Edna Sobricaray said.

Task Force Mapalad is an organization of farmer beneficiaries in Negros Occidental, Iloilo and Mindoro who are fighting for the occupation of lands awarded them.

The group is still fighting for the installation of farmers in haciendas Espinos, Fany, Conchita Villanueva, Agida and Cambuktot, all in La Castillana municipality, and haciendas Mulawin and Mina Kalaw in Sagay City.

Sobricaray, a farmer beneficiary in Hacienda Conchita Villanueva, said the Supreme Court's decision in the Cuenca case would be used to justify the installation of the beneficiaries.

Officials of the Department of Land Reform are set to fly to Negros Occidental today, along with Task Force Mapalad officers, to finalize plans of installing the farmer beneficiaries at the Hacienda Velez Malaga.

Sobricaray said the farmers needed a police detachment in the haciendas covered by the CARP because landowners were using guns and goons to force the farmers out of the lands awarded them.

"We hope that as part of the protection extended by the DLR to CLOA holders, the government would give police assistance and legal service to families who have lost members while fighting for their lands," she said.

At least three farmers have been killed since August last year due to land-related cases in the eight haciendas in Negros Occidental.

Gov't to use coco funds for SMC stock rights

THE GOVERNMENT will take part in the stock rights offering of San Miguel Corp. due on Thursday by dipping into the accumulated funds of the Coconut Industry Investment Fund (CIIF).

Albay Rep. Joey Salceda, an adviser of President Macapagal-Arroyo, said the government will tap the P2.1 billion accumulated dividends of the CIIF to pay for roughly half of the shares that it was entitled to in San Miguel's right issue.

Although a partial subscription, Salceda said the P2.1 billion investment would be enough to maintain the government's five board seats in San Miguel because the CIIF shares would only be diluted by less than one percentage point to 27 percent.

This means the government would not have to borrow as much as P4.5 billion from the Development Bank of the Philippines to finance its full participation in the rights offering.

"All's well that ends well," Salceda said.

By protecting the government's interest in San Miguel, Salceda said: "We can execute the President's original idea to sell government shares in San Miguel as a bloc without being diluted so we can get a premium as controlling stake."

The sale of the sequestered stake of 27 percent coupled with the 14 percent combined shares of Social Security System and Government Service and Insurance System would fetch a big premium because it would give potential bidders the single biggest bloc in the country's biggest food and beverage firm.

President Arroyo was aware that failure to subscribe to the rights issue would water down government's stake in San Miguel which was why she wanted government financial institutions to bankroll the investment.

The President had earlier ordered government financial institutions to help bankroll PCGG's participation in the rights offer to prevent the dilution of the coconut farmers' San Miguel shares.

The President has ordered the sale of the sequestered San Miguel shares after the Sandiganbayan rejected Cojuangco's appeal questioning the court's decision upholding the government's claim to the 27 percent interest in SMC acquired through coco levy funds in the 1970s. The government is also contesting Cojuangco's claim to the 19 percent interest in SMC in a separate case.

RP leads pressure for Burma reforms

THE PHILIPPINES will lead the pressure to strip Burma (Myanmar) of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) chairmanship in 2006 during the International Parliamentary Union meeting in Manila on April 3-8, a top official said Tuesday.

Legislators from the 10-member Asean will meet on the sidelines of the IPU meeting to call for reforms in Burma, said Senate President Franklin Drilon.

Between 1,500 and 2,000 legislators from Asia, Europe and the Americas are expected to attend the six-day IPU meeting, which would serve as a forum for issues relating to world peace and democracy.

"The Asean parliamentarians will meet in order to come up with a strategy as to how the different governments in Asean will address the issue of Burma and compel the country to have a definite timetable on the road map to democracy," Drilon told reporters.

Drilon said Filipino legislators will propose an Asean-wide stand similar to a resolution now pending in the Philippine Senate, calling for Burma to be barred from assuming the Asean chairmanship in 2006.

One of the objectives in making political noise in the IPU meeting is to "isolate Myanmar (Burma)," Drilon said.

Asean groups the Philippines, Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Burma, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam. It rotates its chair alphabetically and Burma [under its military-given name] is due to take over from Malaysia in 2006.

Military-ruled Burma was admitted to Asean in 1997 but has continued to ignore calls to free democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi.

Drilon said some countries had raised concerns over Rangoon's failure to set a timetable for its "road map to democracy" in the run-up to its chairmanship of Asean next year.

The success of this road map, he said, hinges on the resolution of issues, such as the release of Suu Kyi *AFP: TJ Burgonio*

Velasco heads IPU task force

By Luige A. del Puerto

THE POLICE activated yesterday Task Force Parliament, the group that would secure the delegates to the 112th International Parliamentary Union assembly to be held in the country on April 3-8.

Philippine National Police Director General Arturo Lomibao designated Deputy Director General Reynaldo Velasco, deputy chief for administration, as the task force chief. Velasco also headed the task force that secured US President George W. Bush during his state visit here in 2003.

To counter any threats both by local and international terrorist organizations, a "comprehensive security plan" has been laid out, Lomibao said in a statement.

"(This is) to minimize, if not totally discount, the possibility of any untoward incident," he said.

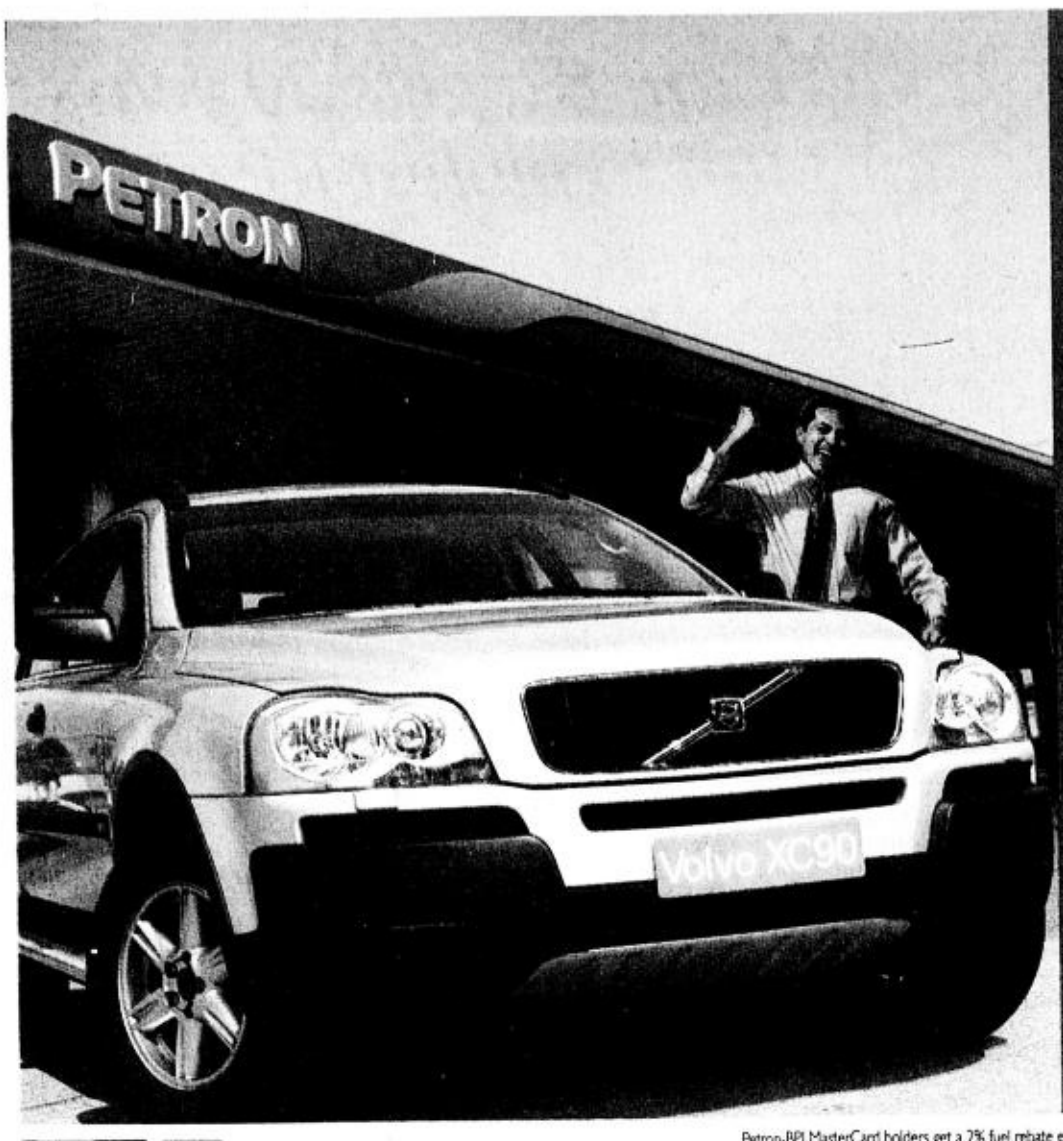
"For purposes of planning, we are anticipating the worst, but generally we are hoping for the best," he added.

Lomibao said Task Force Parliament was divided into five units, each under the jurisdiction of the police station in places the delegates are expected to visit. These are in Metro Manila, Central Luzon, the Calabarzon region, Western Visayas and Central Visayas.

The security preparations are almost complete, the police said, save for one thing and that is the rounding up of the homeless in Metro Manila.

"We will round them all up—the street persons, the vagabonds, the rugby boys, the crazies," Deputy Director General Avelino Razon said.

The "cleanup" will start on tomorrow, Razon added. *With Christine O. Avendaño*



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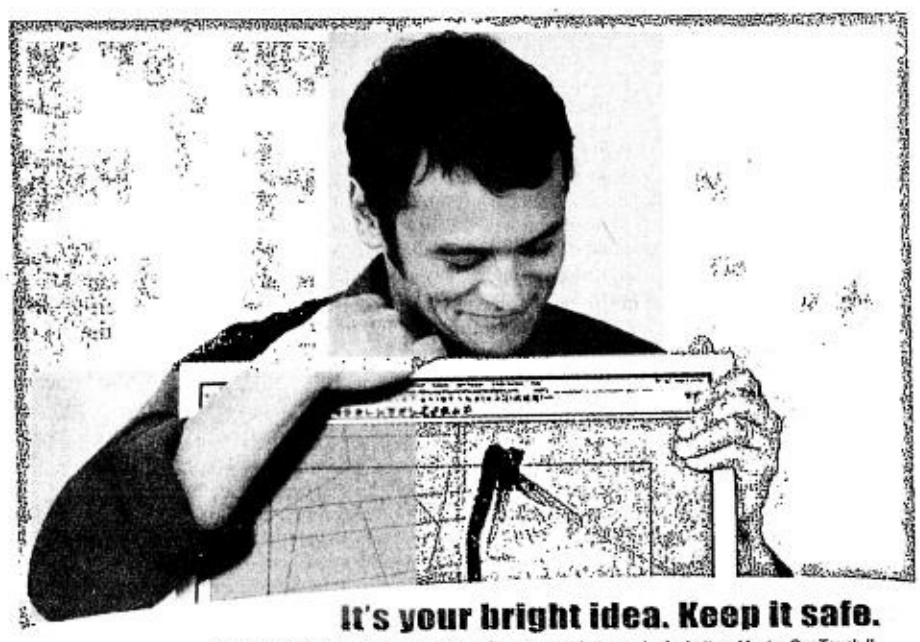

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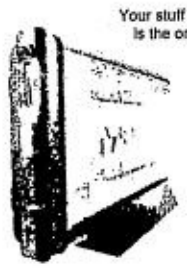

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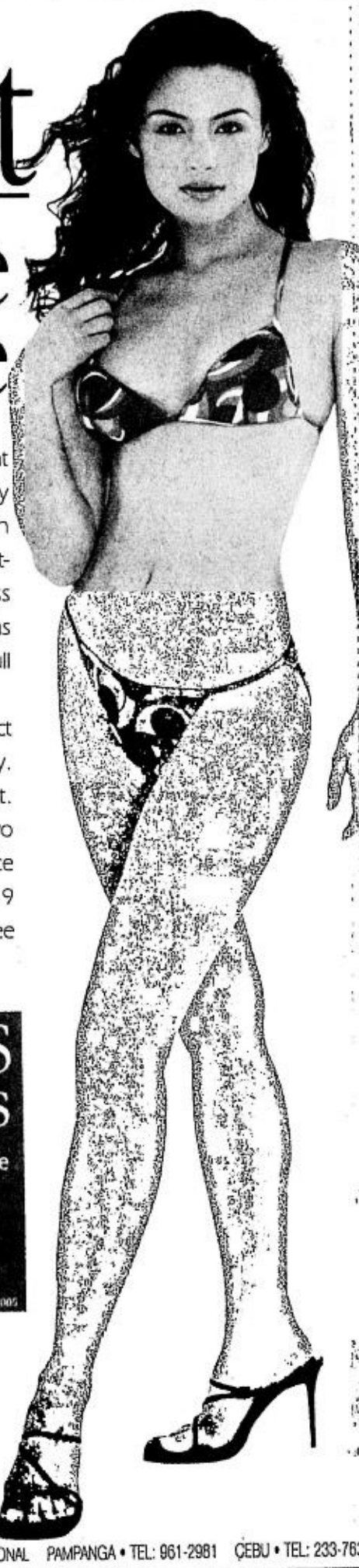

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MILITARY EXPANSION

China plans worry US

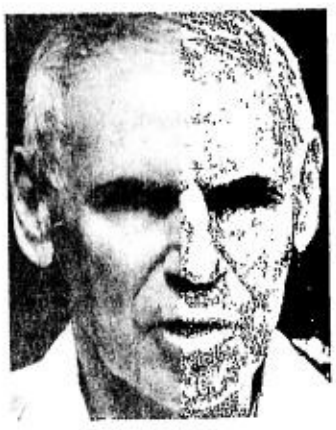
A MONTH after assuming command of US forces in the Pacific, Admiral William J. Fallon yesterday voiced apprehension about China's military expansion and its intentions toward Taiwan, while promising "whatever assets we may have" to Southeast Asian allies fighting terrorists.

Fallon said his priorities as head of the largest of nine US military commands—an area stretching from the US West Coast to the Pacific and across the Indian Ocean—would be fighting the war on terror and building regional military cooperation so "we can put ourselves in a position where we can respond quickly."

He also noted China's increasing military presence and the repercussions for Taiwan—the second-most dangerous flashpoint in the region after the Korean Peninsula.

"China is becoming a significant power in the region," Fallon told The Associated Press in a wide-raging interview. "I don't know what the desired end state is. I'm not sure they do either.

"They're vibrant, they have huge resources and lots of needs.



FALLON

I believe they are beginning to look outward, and they haven't done so for decades," he said.

"They're working their way into becoming a power, and we recognize that. The issue would be how they plan to position themselves, what are the objectives, what is the motivation behind this pretty obvious building of military power."

Fallon said that last year, China acquired "a lot of high-tech equipment that doesn't particularly seem defensive to me." He also called China's anti-secession law aimed at Taiwan, which the mainland views as a renegade territory, "unhelpful" in defusing the tension across the Taiwan Strait.

"The position of my government is that we ask no oversteps are taken to upset the status quo," he said.

The United States is bound by the Taiwan Relations Act to help Taiwan defend itself if China attacks and is the only major nation that sells advanced weapons to the self-ruled island.

Fallon, who had just visited Seoul, said Pyongyang "has demonstrated a track record of less than predictable decision-making.

"Its declaration recently that they have nuclear weapons capabilities may or may not be true," he said. "We certainly know from many sources that they appear to be working on this and maybe they have nuclear weapons."

He said he was deeply concerned about North Korea's ballistic missiles program, "one of the few in the world in the hands of people that give us reason to pause." *AP*

American, 87, gets 20 years for plan to molest RP girls

LOS ANGELES—An 87-year-old American sex tourist who was arrested as he set off to have sex with two pre-teen girls in the Philippines was sentenced Monday to 20 years in jail.

Wheelchair-bound widower and grandfather John Seljan had faced up to 180 years in prison for the six counts on which he was convicted in November, prosecutors said earlier.

But US federal Judge Alicemarie Stotler said she had to take into account the reality that the minimum sentence she could impose—15 to 20 years—would put Seljan behind bars for the rest of his life.

"When you're 87 years old, it is tantamount to a life sentence," Stotler told the court in Santa Ana, in California's Orange County.

Seljan, a former country singer, was the first person to be convicted at trial of violating the 2003 Protect Act that punishes US sex tourists irrespective of where the crime occurred.

He was arrested at Los Angeles International Airport in October 2003 as he prepared to board a flight to the Philippines, where prosecutors said he was planning to have sex with two girls aged nine and 12.

The suspect was armed with 45 kilograms (100 pounds) of chocolates, sex aids, pornographic pictures and sexually explicit letters written to the two young girls.

Many of the pictures show the old man with small girls who were often naked. Seljan is sometimes naked or has his underwear pulled down, while his letters to the girls are rife with references to their "love-making."

Seljan, who urged young girls to call him "Uncle Johnny," told FBI agents who arrested him that he had been "educating" young Filipinas for 20 years but did not know that his actions were illegal, his trial court had heard.

But the judge was skeptical: "To everyone else it is just so very difficult, if not downright hideous, to understand what Mr. Seljan did, (and) to understand that he could really think that this was not wrong," she said.

Prosecutors say Seljan, who authorities began investigating in November 2002 after intercepting one of his letters, also had maps to the girls' homes in his luggage.

The conviction and 20-year sentence highlights a US crackdown on its citizens travelling abroad for sex tourism.

"The PROTECT Act criminalized conduct by Americans who travel abroad to molest children in foreign countries," said Assistant US Attorney Richard Lee said after the sentencing.

Seljan "is one example of an individual trying to do just that and I think his 20-year sentence reflects the seriousness of how Congress views the problem and what they're trying to do about it," he said.

Seljan was convicted in 1977 of first-degree sexual assault on an 11-year-old in the northeastern US state of Wisconsin. *AFP*

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Wednesday, March 30, 2005
Octave of Easter, Wednesday

1st Reading: Acts 3:1-10
Gospel: Luke 24:13-35

That same day, two of them were going to Emmaus, a village seven miles from Jerusalem, and they talked about what had happened. While they were talking and wondering, Jesus came up and walked with them, but their eyes were held and they did not recognize him.

He asked, "What is this you are talking about?" The two stood still, looking sad. Then one named Cleophas answered, "Why, it seems you are the only traveler in Jerusalem who doesn't know what has happened there these past few days." And he asked, "What is it?"

They replied, "It is about Jesus of Nazareth. He was a prophet, you know, mighty in word and deed before God and the people. But the chief priests and our rulers sentenced him to death. They handed him over to be crucified. We had hoped that he would redeem Israel.

It is now the third day since all this took place. It is true that some women of our group have disturbed us. When they went to the tomb at dawn, they did not find his body; they came to tell us that they had seen a vision of angels who told them that Jesus was alive. Some friends of our group went to the tomb and found everything just as the women had said, but they did not see him."

He said to them, "How dull you are, how slow of understanding! You fail to believe the message of the prophets. Is it not written that the Christ should suffer all this and then enter his glory?" Then starting with Moses and going through the prophets, he explained to them everything in the Scriptures concerning himself.

As they drew near the village they were heading for, Jesus made as if to go farther. But they prevailed upon him, "Stay with us, for night comes quickly. The day is now almost over." So he went in to stay with them. When they were at table, he took the bread, said a blessing, broke it and gave each a piece.

Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized him; but he vanished out of their sight. And they said to each other, "Were not our hearts filled with ardent yearning when he was talking to us on the road and explaining the Scriptures?"

They immediately set out and returned to Jerusalem. There they found the Eleven and their companions gathered together. They were greeted by these words: "Yes, it is true, the Lord is risen! He has appeared to Simon!" Then the two told what had happened on the road and how Jesus made himself known when he broke bread with them.

Commentary

This is the story of the two disciples running away from Jerusalem and all that has happened there and going home, in despair, having lost even their hopes for who Jesus might have been. All shattered by crucifixion and death. But Jesus walks with them and doesn't let them go that easily. He opens their minds and stirs their hearts to life with the opening of the Scriptures and all the words from Moses onwards about him and why/how he would suffer before his glory. They recognize him in the breaking of the bread, but only after he has spent hours breaking open their minds and hearts so that they can finally see and remember all that he has taught them. And they go back, to face suffering, death, fear and isolation—and the Risen Lord who now is everywhere, waiting for us and seeking to give us hope in the Word and our hearts alive again in the meaning of the Scriptures that give us faith in the breaking of the bread.

SUPREME COURT DOCTRINES

REMEDIAL LAW (CRIMINAL PROCEDURE)—Issuance of bail bonds—It is settled that a judge who conducted the preliminary investigation, who has jurisdiction over the place where the accused was arrested, has authority to grant bail and to order the release of the accused even if the records of the case had been transmitted for review to the Office of the Provincial Prosecutor. A municipal judge conducting a preliminary examination and for admission of the accused to bail is tasked to determine whether there is probable cause against the accused and, if so, whether the evidence of guilt is strong. This can, likewise, be gleaned from Section 5, Rule 114 of the Rules of Criminal Procedure. If it happens for instance, that the accused was in detention during the preliminary investigation conducted by the municipal trial court but wished to put up bail after the records of the investigation had been forwarded to the fiscal, bail may be filed not in the municipal trial court which fixed the amount of his bail but with the regional trial court of the place where he is being held. Also, if no charge has as yet been filed but the person under arrest would wish to go on temporary liberty, he may apply for bail with any court in the province, city or municipality where he is held. However, when the preliminary investigation has been concluded and the judge has recommended the filing of the corresponding information against the accused and had forwarded the records of the case to the Provincial Prosecutor, the court loses its preliminary jurisdiction over the said case. Having been divested of jurisdiction over the case, the municipal trial court no longer has any authority to issue any order or directive in connection therewith, especially such as would involve the liberty of the accused. Thus, a judge who approves applications for bail of accused whose cases were not only pending in other courts but who were, likewise, arrested and detained outside his territorial jurisdiction is guilty of gross ignorance of the law and violates Rule 3.01 of the Code of Judicial Conduct. [Citations omitted.] [Justice Callejo, Sr., Second Division, Español vs Mupas, A.M. No. MTJ-01-1348]

By R. B. Vera

FVR on nat'l ID: Respect people's privacy

By Christine O. Avendaño

FORMER President Fidel V. Ramos, a proponent of the national identification system, has this piece of advice for the Arroyo administration: Make sure it does not invade the people's privacy.

Ramos said this was what he told those present at the National Security Council meeting convened by President Macapagal-Arroyo in Malacañang yesterday.

"It (national ID system) was one of the side issues in relation to proposed legislation to help fight the threats [to national security]," Ramos told reporters.

The proposal to implement a national ID system was raised during the NSC meeting, Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye confirmed.

Bunye told reporters the meeting saw government officials and legislators reaching a consensus on the need for "tougher laws to combat criminality."

"There was a consensus that the time has come for the antiterrorism bill to be given priority," Bunye said.

At the meeting, House Minority Leader Rep. Francis Escudero was quoted as saying that the minority was not against the passage of a law to counter terrorism.

Among those who attended the meeting aside from President Arroyo, Ramos and Escudero were former President Corazon Aquino, Vice President Noli de Castro, Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita, Senate President Franklin Drilon, Speaker Jose de Venecia, Armed Forces chief of staff Gen. Efren Abu, Philippine National Police Director General Arturo Lomibao and other lawmakers and department secretaries.

After the meeting, Ramos told reporters that it was really up to the leaders of Congress to work out how the national ID card system should take shape, considering that there were those for and against it.

But he said he had told those at the meeting that the national ID card "should not be seen as an instrument for the invasion of privacy, which is the favorite argument being put forward by those who oppose (it)."

"A great, great number of ordinary Filipinos... would want to see the national ID card as our membership card in the Republic of the Philippines, [to which] law-abiding Filipinos, whether natural-born, naturalized or dual citizens [are entitled]," Ramos said.

He said the ID card should entitle "the holder thereof to the privileges and rights of law-abiding citizens, just like any membership card in any fraternal, social, cultural or veterans' association."

Ramos acknowledged that the Supreme Court had rejected the national ID system he had proposed when he was President during the '90s.

But the high court's declaration then of his proposal as unconstitutional was because what he had sought to enact was an executive order, Ramos said.

"In other words, the unconstitutionality of our version of the national ID was due to a legal, procedural technicality [which] did not remove or eliminate the merits of having such an ID system," Ramos said.

Ramos disowns aides' junta plan

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

FORMER President Fidel V. Ramos yesterday distanced himself from his former security aides who had come out with a position paper pushing for the establishment of a civilian-military junta to replace the Arroyo administration.

In a hastily called press conference in Malacañang, Ramos said: "I am surprised I'm back in the headlines. I don't deserve to be in the headlines anymore. I would like to reiterate, I rejected this proposal as I had always rejected this when it came out a few years ago. I oppose a movement to put a civilian or military junta or a combination of both to replace something that is democratic and constitutional."

Ramos' former top security aides—Gen. Jose Almonte (ret.) and Maj. Gen. Fortunato Abat (ret.)—had recently resurrected their old proposal pushing for a regimented democracy to replace the Arroyo administration which they said was a failure.

Ramos, who was in Malacañang to attend a National Security Council meeting, said he was forced to come forward to dispute the reports linking him to the coup talk after this began to spread.

"They [the people] think that since we are close associates that Ramos is part of the plan. That is the farthest from the truth," the former President said.

The last time he talked to Almonte, Ramos said, was three months ago. He said he had not seen Abat since before last year's elections.

But while their views may differ, Ramos said he still "appreciated his association with Abat and Almonte up to 1998." Almonte was his national security adviser while Abat was his defense secretary.

Ramos then renewed his pledge to stand by President Macapagal-Arroyo.

"I will fight against the junta, if necessary, that might result from this movement, God forbid, because this will be a throwback to the old Marcos martial law system ," Ramos said.

Ramos was Armed Forces deputy chief of staff in the martial law regime. He later led in the overthrow of Marcos in 1986.

Ramos said President Arroyo was unruffled by the rumors and many retired military officers were against changing the present government.

Sandigan drops case vs former DBP chief

By Nelson F. Flores

THE SANDIGANBAYAN has dismissed the P160 million behest loan case against an alleged Marcos crony following the failure of the government to present evidence after nearly two decades.

The anti-graft court's third division headed by Justice Godofredo Legaspi on Monday dismissed the case against former Development Bank of the Philippines chair Cesar Zalamea that the PCGG filed in 1987.

The ruling in effect also cleared former first lady Imelda Marcos, who inherited the case when her husband, the former strongman and president Ferdinand Marcos died.

The dismissal of the case came after government lawyers failed to present any evidence against Zalamea during Monday's hearing for the initial presentation of evidence.

However, the decision of Legaspi, which Justices Efren Dela Cruz and Norberto Gonzales seconded, is without prejudice to the refiling of the case since the PCGG has been telling the court that the suit is still "undergoing review."

Aside from Marcos and Zalamea, the other defendants in the case but excluded from the charge sheet were Bernardo Vergara, Placido Mapa and Anos Fonacier.

Vergara managed to have the case against him dismissed while Mapa and Fonacier were given immunity after agreeing to a compromise agreement with the government.

The PCGG alleged that the defendants established and organized the Cebu Plaza Hotel and were granted, through an express and personal approval by the former president, a P135 million loan from the DBP in June 1978 despite its "gross undercapitalization" of only P500,000.

Despite its failure to pay the P135 million loan, the PCGG disclosed that the Philippine Tourism Authority "provided and paid for additional shares" worth P25 million to Cebu Plaza Hotel. The PCGG further complained that the hotel, which was owned by the Cebu City government, was awarded to Fonacier "without any public bidding."

The DBP debt until now had remained unpaid.

Government prosecutors are seeking at least P51 billion in damages, P50 billion for moral damages and P1 billion exemplary damages.

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Anti-VAT group challenges UP 11 study: It used old data

By Norman Bordadora

A COALITION opposed to the proposed increase in the value-added tax (VAT) said the so-called UP 11 used old data to justify the VAT hike with the analysis saying that it would not affect the country's poor as much as it would the rich.

"We are also wondering why [the 11 economists from the University of the Philippines] chose to use an outdated data base in estimating the VAT burden when there is already a more recent version of this survey," said Lina Monsod, spokesperson of anti-VAT hike campaign Kontra KulimVAT.

Monsod said the UP 11 used the National Statistics Office's Family Income and Expenditure Survey report of 2000 when the results of the most recent FIES survey in 2003 was available.

"Since they have primary access to official government surveys, the UP professors would have been among the first to discover that the incomes of Filipino families have actually fallen while their expenditures have risen if we compare the results of the 2000 and 2003 surveys," Monsod said.

She said the 2003 FIES showed more income groups registering negative savings (or "dissavings") compared with the 2000 FIES.

"The inequity of income distribution also worsened, but the UP 11 failed to factor in these facts in their paper," Monsod said.

Kontra KulimVAT challenged the claim of the UP economists that the rich would bear much of the burden of the proposed 12-percent VAT rate.

The group said the economists may have used "highly selective" data to justify the passage of the VAT measure during the special session of Congress from March 30 to April 1.

"We believe it is the middle class and the poorer class that will shoulder most of the VAT," she said.

Monsod said that while Kontra KulimVAT "agrees partially" with the UP 11's claim that the richest 10 percent paid for 40 percent of the VAT in 2000 and the poorest half accounted for 17 percent, the economists failed to emphasize that the 43 percent was shouldered by the working class and middle class.

"These are families who are neither rich nor extremely poor. They account for some 6.2 million families nationwide earning between P80,000 to P249,999 annually, or just P6,667 to P20,833 per month," Monsod said.

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Drilon upbeat on Senate OK

From page A1

spondents Association of the Philippines.

Asked what could be expected during the special session called by President Macapagal-Arroyo, Drilon said: "The Senate will pass its version. Then we go to the bicam(eral conference)."

Compromises

Drilon said compromises were expected to shape up during the bicameral conference, where the conflicting versions of the Senate and the House of Representatives will be reconciled.

"That's precisely what the bicam is all about, to come up with an acceptable compromise," Drilon told Focap.

He later told Senate reporters there was basis for Malacañang's optimism that the Senate would be able to pass the tax measure by the end of the special session on Friday.

"Despite the pessimism of media, I will have a quorum," Drilon told reporters.

Drilon said he was assured by the House leadership that it will "exert every effort" to muster a quorum in the House. Under the bicameral legislature, no session can be held if there is no quorum in both houses.

Dreaming

But Pimentel and Arroyo doubted that the VAT bill would be passed this week.

"Not in three days, not in three weeks," Arroyo said.

"I think Malacañang is dreaming because several senators still have many questions about (the bill). I am not convinced they will be able to finish their inquiries," Pimentel said.

Arroyo expressed confidence that the Senate would stand for the retention of the VAT rate at 10 percent, saying he could not imagine who among the senators would dare stand up to propose an amendment to the Recto committee report, which is batting for the 10-percent rate.

The real fight

The real fight will be in the lifting of exemptions, which was recommended by the Recto committee, because some senators and Malacañang are pushing for the exemption of the power sector, according to the senator.

"The Recto bill would eliminate the VAT exemption of IPPs (independent power producers) and gencos (generating companies). Malacañang wants to maintain the exemption and the strategy is for some senators to propose an amendment," Arroyo said.

Most contentious issue

He said other senators would oppose this. "There'll be a battle royal on this issue, the most contentious (of all)," he said.

Despite Malacañang's pretensions that it is confident of the VAT's passage, the President has marshaled all her forces to fight for the IPPs, Arroyo said.

"Many of us in the Senate keep on wondering why the President is exhausting all her goodwill for the cause of the IPPs—they who have caused and continue to cause the country and people so much financial pain and misery and yet are being rewarded with presidential aid and favors," the senator said.

"That is why the VAT bill cannot be passed by the Senate in this special session," Arroyo said.

But he said 12 senators are expected to attend today's special session, enough to have a quorum.

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Special thanks to: Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (FES) & Institute of Politics and Governance (IPG)

'Twas free, says Mike A lawyer

From page A1

"It was a complimentary accommodation," said Arroyo's lawyer, Jesus Santos, in a press conference yesterday afternoon at the Lourdes Tuazon Arroyo building in Makati City.

"It's just like whenever we fly abroad and we take economy seats. Once the airline sees his name, he is upgraded to first class," explained his chief of staff, Juris Soliman.

Santos said the presidential husband felt he had to air his side after INQUIRER sports columnist Recah Trinidad wrote that a Filipino, specifically a "heavyweight backer" of Filipino boxing champ Manny Pacquiao, had allegedly splurged on a $20,000 a night room at the MGM Grand Hotel in Las Vegas.

The suite occupies a total of 12,000 square feet of floor space, has its own swimming pool, a front garden and other amenities.

Trinidad narrowed down his description by saying that the said public figure was not a congressman.

Apart from Arroyo, more than a dozen congressmen flew to Las Vegas to cheer for Pacquiao in his bout against Mexico's Erik Morales. The First Gentleman felt the Trinidad piece had alluded to him.

Confirm with MGM

"He was not even identified but there was an insinuation, They could call up MGM if they want and confirm the report. This is despicable, ridiculous," said Santos.

Arroyo, Pacquiao's "benefactor" as described by Soliman, flew to Las Vegas on March 18 to catch Pacquiao's bout, then flew back home on March 22.

Soliman said Arroyo was with his brother, Negros Occidental Rep. Ignacio Arroyo, when he came to the MGM Grand Hotel, where the Pacquiao-Morales bout was also held. The younger Arroyo was already booked, and the presidential husband was inquiring about a room when he was informed of the complimentary accommodation.

"He was even surprised when he learned he had a complimentary room, and he just said "Oh, thank you," said Soliman.

Not luxurious

This was confirmed by the younger Arroyo and Rep. Monico Puentevella who said the First Gentleman was given a complimentary room by the MGM Grand but it was not luxurious.

"It was complimentary. I stayed with him in the room and it was ordinary," the younger Arroyo said in a telephone interview.

But Arroyo and Puentevella denied rumors that the First Gentleman was the Filipino who had rented a $20,000-a-night suite in the Las Vegas hotel to watch the Morales-Pacquiao boxing match.

Congressman Arroyo revealed that it was Pacquiao who provided the First Gentleman his plane ticket to fly to Las Vegas for the boxing match.

"Manny gave us four tickets. You can check with him," the younger Arroyo said.

Unfair

Puentevella scored the political opposition for allegedly dragging the First Gentleman's name into the controversy.

"It's unfair for the opposition to do this. They should come up with a name and identify who this person is," he said.

Puentevella, who covered the boxing match for a radio network, said he did not know the identity of the Filipino who rented the $20,000-a night-room at the MGM Grand.

"I don't even think that it was the First Gentleman. It might be somebody else. As far as I know, what he had was an ordinary room," he said.

Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye said Malacañang would look into the persistent rumors.

"These are just rumors but we will see who is being referred to by this information. As of now, we do not know how these rumors came about. Once we get the information on this, we will give you an official statement," Bunye said. "It would have been better if the writers had identified their subject considering there are plenty of people patronizing that hotel."

Live modestly

House Minority Leader Francis Escudero on Monday called for a congressional investigation into Trinidad's column which reported that a Filipino, reputedly a public figure, had rented a $20,000 suite at the MGM Grand Hotel.

He said the investigation would not focus on determining the identity of the public figure but only on strengthening the country's laws against ostentatious display of wealth by public officials or their relatives.

Escudero noted that the Code of Conduct and Ethical Standards for Public Officials and Employees calls on government officials to live modest lives while the Civil Code bars ostentatious displays of wealth which might cause public unrest.

He cited Article 25 of the Civil Code which says that "Thoughtless extravagance in expenses for pleasure or display during periods of acute public want or emergency may be stopped by order of the courts at the instance of any government or private institution."

With a report Gil Cabacungan Jr. and AFP

Beating the heat: Stay in the shade, drink up

DON'T let the heat get to you.

The rising temperatures, which herald the start of the summer season, increase people's risk of suffering from heatstroke, according to health secretary Manuel Dayrit.

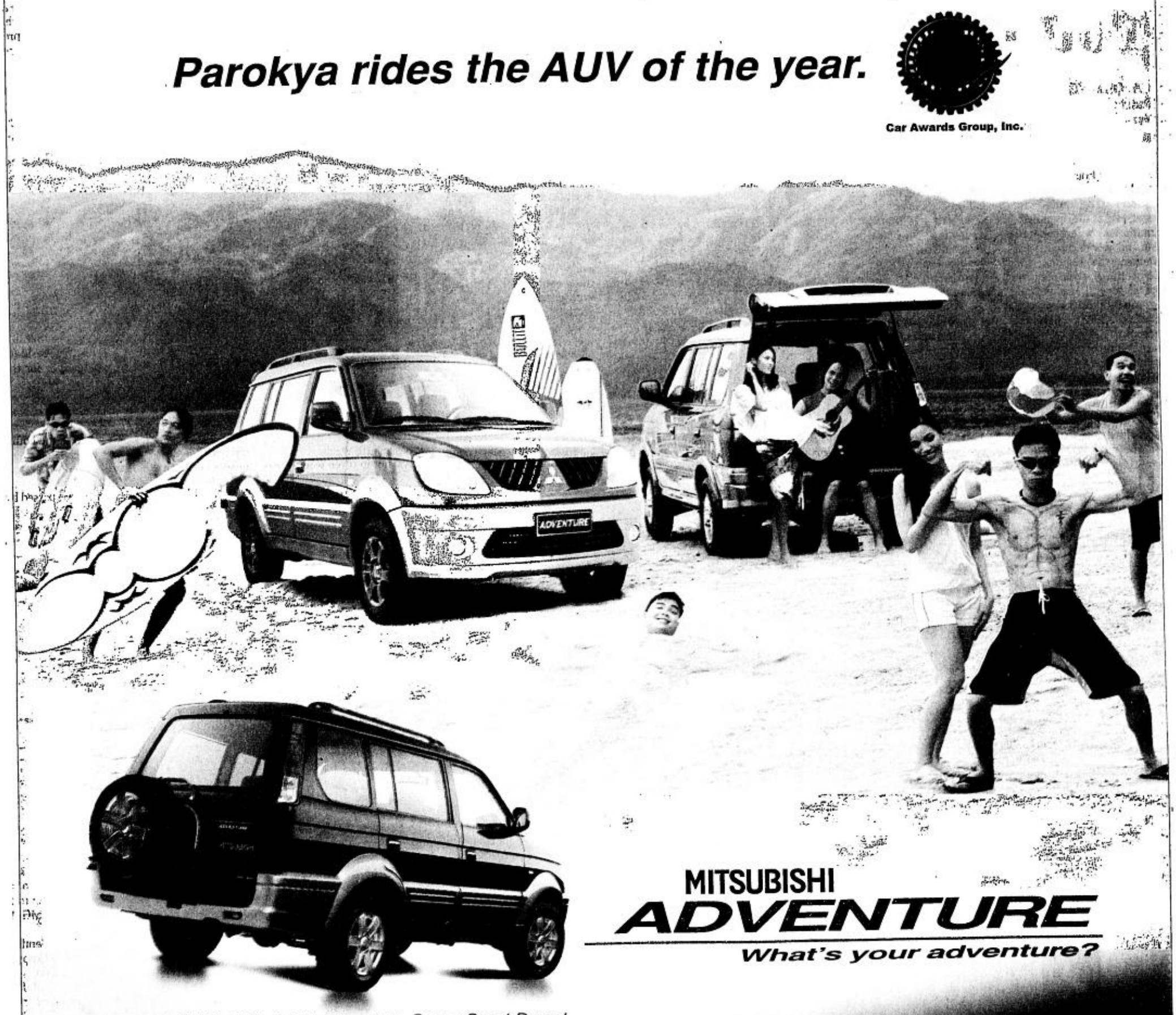
Fortunately, it is fairly easy to avoid it—stay in the shade and drink water, ideally eight to 10 glasses a day.

Dayrit said people suffer from heatstroke when their body temperature rises beyond the normal 37 degrees Celsius. Symptoms include sudden dizziness, weakness, fainting, headache, rapid heartbeat, muscle cramps and dark yellow urine. It needs immediate medical attention.

People who are out in the sun or in hot, crowded places and who don't get enough shade or water are especially at risk of heatstroke, Dayrit said.

"If you're out at the beach or you're out at work and you're not hydrating, that's when you get heatstroke. Normally, it happens to people who may be in crowded places, who didn't bring any water supply with them and they can't get out and they're trapped, like in a rally. The combined heat of the sun and the losses of water bring down their hydration level," he told reporters.

Dayrit said people must remember to drink water, especially if they're exercising, to avoid dehydration. He noted that people lose water in their body three ways: through their urine, sweat or breath. *Leila B. Salaverria*



The WORLD

Editor Luverne B. Gueco

2,000 Syrian troops pour out of Lebanon; pressure mounts

BEIRUT—Syria's troop presence in Lebanon reached its lowest level in three decades as 2,000 more soldiers returned home in recent days, the Lebanese military said Monday. The move puts Damascus on track to have all its forces out before Lebanese parliamentary elections in May—a key US and UN demand.

Despite the continued troop withdrawal, pressure mounted against Syria and its allied Lebanese government.

Lebanon's acting foreign ministry chief, Butros Asaker, flew to New York to attend a United Nations Security Council session aimed at forming an international inquiry into former Lebanese premier Rafik Hariri's Feb. 14 assassination.

Lebanon has grudgingly agreed to go along with a UN-led inquiry, which has the potential to embarrass both Syrian and Lebanese authorities, who many here believe were involved in Hariri's death. Both governments deny such claims.

A UN fact-finding mission has already criticized Syria for creating the conditions for Hariri's death and poured scorn on the Lebanese investigation into the killing.

Some 5,000 female activists staged a noisy march in downtown Beirut demanding Syria end its control over Lebanon, which stretches back to the early stages of this country's 1975-90 civil war.

"Syria get out of Lebanon," shouted the women while walking about 1 km from the seafront street where Hariri's motorcade was blown up to his grave in Martyrs' Square.

Syria is believed to have about 8,000 troops in eastern Lebanon following the return home of 2,000 soldiers during recent days, a Lebanese military official said on condition of anonymity. Immediately before Hariri's death, about 14,000 Syrian troops were in Lebanon. At their peak they numbered about 40,000.

Also Monday, Syrian soldiers dismantled eight positions near the eastern city of Baalbek, while about 25 km to the north in Chaat, more troops loaded goods into 10 trucks, each towing an anti-aircraft gun.

The official said the Lebanese-Syrian Military Commission will meet next week to agree on the second phase of the military withdrawal, which is expected to see the complete removal of Syrian forces from Lebanon. About 4,000 soldiers left in the withdrawal's first phase that ended March 17.

Pro-Syrian Lebanese Defense Minister Abdul Rahim Murad said the pullout will continue "until all the Syrian army has entered Syrian territory."

The United Nations and Washington are demanding a full Syrian withdrawal before Lebanese parliamentary elections due to begin in April and go through May.

"The full pullout from Lebanon will remove any pretext claiming that Syria influences Lebanese elections," Syrian political analyst Imad Fawzi al-Shueibi said. "Syria wants to push away any possibility of being a target" for US or international pressures, he added.

Visiting US envoy David Satterfield said the polls must be held on time with international observers monitoring.

"We have said many times that the international community wishes to see Lebanon move forward in a political process which leads rapidly to elections as scheduled," Satterfield told reporters. *AP*

JI linking with other terror groups, Singapore warns

SINGAPORE—The Jemaah Islamiyah terror group is consolidating its resources and reaching out to other Islamic militant organizations in the region despite a law enforcement crackdown, a top Singaporean official said Tuesday.

"The Jemaah Islamiyah, or the JI, has been knocked down but definitely not knocked out," Wong Kan Seng, home affairs minister, said at the opening of an international conference on terrorism and how to counter it.

"Despite the regional crackdown on the JI, which led to the arrest of several key JI leaders, the group is repositioning and rejuvenating itself," Wong said. "Much of the JI network and its infrastructure of radical schools continue to operate in the region; they know they are under watch and are consolidating their strength."

The al-Qaida-linked terror group, which is based in Indonesia, has been blamed for a host of attacks and plots throughout Southeast Asia, including the 2002 Bali nightclub attacks that killed 202 people, a blast at Jakarta's J.W. Marriott hotel the following year that killed 12, and a suicide car bombing at the Australian Embassy in the Indonesian capital last September that killed 10.

"Those JI terrorists who seek to mount operations are not using JI members but are leveraging on the support and resources of fraternal groups," Wong said. He noted that Jemaah Islamiyah terrorists provided direction for the bombing of the Australian Embassy in Jakarta last year, but that most of those involved in the attack were not JI members.

Wong spoke at a conference called Global Security Asia 2005, a gathering of thousands of defense and security officials from the Asia-Pacific region, as well as business executives from companies that provide security services and products.

JI recruits are believed to be training in Mindanao in the southern Philippines, and an Indonesian terror suspect was arrested in connection with bombings last month that killed eight people in three Philippine cities.

During interrogation, the Indonesian suspect admitted training members of the Abu Sayyaf group in bomb making. The alleged bombers were later arrested by police authorities.

Wong said those attacks "demonstrated a high level of coordination involving a number of fraternal groups" and warned that "greater collaborative networking" could lead to the spread of terror methods linked to al-Qaida.

"This is a trend that bears watching. More than that, it underlines the urgent need to disrupt and dismantle the training sites in Mindanao which continue to train these jihadist fraternal groups in the region," Wong said. "What may be occurring in these camps is that the previous segregation of JI and other groups, including local Filipino trainees, is no longer observed.

The Singaporean minister also said he was concerned that regional or international terrorist groups could establish strong links with the Islamic insurgency in southern Thailand.

"If this happens, it will have serious ramifications for the entire region," he said. *AP*

ANTI-MICHAEL Jackson protestor displays a sign, background, as the pop singer and his father Joe, right, accompanied by bodyguards enter the Santa Barbara County Courthouse as testimony continues in his child molestation trial in Santa Maria, California, Monday. AP

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Judge allows testimonies of 5 alleged Jacko victims

SANTA MARIA, California—The judge in Michael Jackson's child sex trial dealt a devastating blow to the star Monday by ruling that jurors can hear details about five past abuse claims against him.

Judge Rodney Melville's decision came after prosecutors argued that the cases, which did not lead to criminal charges, would show Jackson had a history of molesting young boys after "grooming" them for sex.

Under the crucial ruling, jurors will be told of claims made against Jackson in 1990 and 1993 that resulted in him paying millions of dollars to his alleged victims.

"The decision I have reached is I will now admit the testimony with regard to the sexual offenses and the alleged pattern of grooming," Melville said in his long-awaited ruling on the issue.

But only one of the five alleged victims, the son of a former employee of Neverland Ranch who accused Jackson in 1990, will testify when the prior cases are presented to the jurors in about two weeks' time, prosecutors said.

Witnesses will describe the four other alleged cases of abuse at the hands of the pop icon, including claims involving former child star Macaulay Culkin, who has said that "nothing happened" between him and Jackson.

"It's a huge blow to Jackson. It's great news for the prosecutors as it gives them a second chance to make a first impression," said legal analyst Andrew Cohen. The prosecution had earlier suffered serious setbacks when the alleged victim and his siblings presented often contradictory testimony.

Former prosecutor Ann Bremner, who is also following the trial, said that demonstrating a pattern of prior sexual molestation generally has a strong impact on jurors, and that this is certain to be the case when the panel hears one witness after another describing alleged abuses by Jackson.

"People think that 'once a pedophile, always a pedophile'," she said outside the Santa Maria, California courtroom.

Prosecutor Tom Sneddon said that all five alleged cases involved boys aged between 10 and 13.

"The victims are similar in age; the way the victims were cultivated are similar; the crimes are similar," Sneddon told the judge, who barred testimony about two additional allegations against Jackson. *AFP*

3 Romanian journalists abducted

BUCHAREST—Three Romanian journalists have been kidnapped in Baghdad, a television station employing two of the journalists said Tuesday.

The journalists, who went missing Monday, are reporter Marie Jeanne Ion and cameraman Sorin Dumitru Miscoci from Bucharest-based television station Prima TV and daily Romania Libera reporter Ovidiu Ohanesian.

They went missing in the Iraqi capital shortly after an interview with interim Iraqi Prime Minister Ayad Allawi, the newspaper's director Petre Mihai Bacanu told The Associated Press.

Bacanu said Romanian officials in Baghdad told him the three were abducted from their hotel late Monday. He said no group had claimed responsibility for the kidnapping, and no ransom had been demanded.

Prime Minister Calin Popescu Tariceanu said he was "worried" about the situation and announced he had set up a crisis center in the government to coordinate attempts to free the journalists.

Prima TV said in a statement that Ion made a phone call to the newsroom, speaking a mixture of Romanian, Arabic and English, and telling colleagues that they were being kidnapped.

"Don't kill us, we are from a poor country and we have no money," the statement quoted Ion as saying.

She later sent a text message to the station, saying "Help, this is not a joke, we've been kidnapped."

Dan Dumitru, news director at Prima TV, said the two journalists were in Iraq for five days to interview Allawi and interim President Ghazi al-Yawer.

He said that Ion called during an editorial meeting on Monday and he put the phone on speaker.

"Marie-Jeanne was begging in English and in Arabic 'to be left alone'," he said. "Their translator said that they were from Romania, a poor country and don't have money to pay a ransom."

"All I know they have been taken by force and we can't reach them any more," Dumitru told private television station Realitatea TV.

Bacanu said that Ohanesian, 37, "had just had an interview with the prime minister and he told me he wanted to do some features, but I told him not to do that and to come back."

Romania's President Traian Basescu, who was in Iraq and Afghanistan for two days visiting Romanian troops, said upon returning to Bucharest on Tuesday that his government was doing all it could to find the journalists. Basescu said Romania had sought the help of US-led coalition authorities in Iraq.

Romania has about 800 troops in Iraq and about 500 in Afghanistan. *AP*

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Israel's Knesset rejects Gaza Strip pullout referendum

JERUSALEM—Israel's parliament Monday rejected a referendum bill on the planned Gaza Strip evacuation, removing the last obstacle to the pullout and dealing a severe blow to those staunchly opposed to withdrawal.

The bill was thrown out by a landslide majority of 72 MPs to 39, out of the 114 MPs present. There were three abstentions.

After Prime Minister Ariel Sharon nailed enough support to force his 2005 budget through parliament by a cut-off date Thursday, opponents had seized on a referendum as the last political chance to stall his disengagement plan.

A plebiscite would have seriously delayed the evacuation of some 8,000 settlers and troops from the Gaza Strip—already sanctioned by parliament and the Cabinet—but the effort proved futile.

Opponents of the pullout, who include around a third of Sharon's own Likud party, including Finance Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, failed even to secure the support of the ultra-Orthodox Shas party, which in principle opposes the withdrawal.

The bill's defeat sparked an angry response from settler leaders, thousands of whose supporters rallied outside parliament afterwards.

"Our struggle switches to the streets," said a statement from the main settler organization Yesha.

"(Prime Minister Ariel) Sharon today stopped in a brutal manner any chance of putting the pullout plan to the people for decision and thus preventing violent confrontation and civil war."

Arieh Eldad, an MP for the far-right National Union, was even stronger in his rhetoric.

"Today, Sharon missed the last chance to avoid a civil war," he said. "Today, he signed the death warrants of a very large number of people."

Sharon is set to present the details of his pullout strategy to US President George W. Bush at the president's Texas ranch on April 11.

He should then return to Israel bolstered by US support before he goes ahead from July 20 with the evacuation of the Gaza Strip Jewish settlements and Israeli troops, and of four isolated outposts in the northern West Bank.

Palestinian chief negotiator Saeb Erakat welcomed the disengagement plan as "a glimmer of hope" and called for an immediate resumption of political talks.

But Palestinian prime minister Ahmed Qorei said no workable Palestinian state can be established as long as Israel keeps its settlements in the occupied West Bank.

"These blocs, which the American administration has legitimized by giving its support to Israel, make the creation of a viable Palestinian state impossible," he said.

Sharon has said Israel will keep its largest settlements in the West Bank with US blessing under any final Middle East peace deal.

US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice has also said any peace will have to take into account the biggest Jewish settlements.

Meanwhile, the Islamist movement Hamas said it was ready to join the Palestine Liberation Organization, which groups together the major Palestinian factions.

"Our decision to participate in the PLO is not new. It is a long-standing and clear decision," one of its leaders, Mahmud Zahar, said after talks with Palestinian leader Mahmud Abbas in Gaza City.

Progress on earlier disagreements was made during inter-Palestinian talks in Cairo earlier this month, Zahar said.

But he stressed Hamas had not abandoned its commitment to a Palestine incorporating modern-day Israel, regardless of the PLO charter which calls for the creation of a Palestinian state only in land conquered by Israel in 1967.

Speaker of the PLO's parliament Salim Zaanun said the PLO executive committee would meet in Gaza with representatives of Hamas and its smaller rival Islamic Jihad on Tuesday. *AFP*

Jewish settlers mull future strategy

JERUSALEM—Jewish settlers furious with Israel's planned pullout from occupied Gaza were meeting Tuesday to discuss their future strategy after losing all political chances of scuppering the evacuation.

The main Yesha settlers' council was locked in talks the morning after MPs ruled out a referendum on the controversial plan to tear down all 21 Jewish settlements in the Gaza Strip and four isolated outposts in the West Bank.

"Our struggle switches to the streets," said a statement from the council while thousands of supporters rallied outside the Knesset as a referendum bill put forward by MPs sympathetic to their plight was roundly defeated.

A plebiscite would have seriously delayed Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's disengagement plan—already sanctioned by parliament and the cabinet.

"Sharon today stopped in a brutal manner any chance of putting the pullout plan to the people for decision and thus preventing violent confrontation and civil war," it added.

But turnout at the rally fell far short of the 100,000 supporters Yesha boasted of being able to mobilize.

Demonstrators also drifted away into the evening rather than digging in for the 36-hour marathon or "longest demonstration in the history of Israel" that Yesha had hoped to organize.

The council has made no official call for violent resistance and has distanced itself from appeals for soldiers charged with carrying out the evacuation to disobey orders.

Nevertheless the lobby group has whipped up fears of potential civil disobedience and extremist attacks, leaving it understood they would be powerless to stop hardliners bent on acts of sabotage.

"I would do everything to avoid violence, but it is not easy to organize an uncompromising fight against just political officials and not the army and police," Pinhas Wallerstein, a Yesha leader, told army radio.

"I hope that you will manage to continue the struggle (by legitimate means)," hit back Public Security Minister Gideon Ezra.

"We should really find a solution to potential acts from the extremist fringe," he added.

Police said Tuesday they had arrested three Israelis, including a soldier, on suspicion of trying to sell arms to Jewish extremists bent on carrying out attacks to sabotage the evacuation.

The three suspects were detained on Sunday after one of them offered to sell grenades to Yesha leaders, who tipped off police, the media reported.

"We must prepare for two possible scenarios... an attack against Palestinian targets, or more serious, against a Muslim (religious) target," Hezi Kalo, a former agent in the Shin Beth domestic security agency, told public television.

Sharon is set to present the details of his pullout strategy to US President George W. Bush at the president's Texas ranch on April 11. *AFP*

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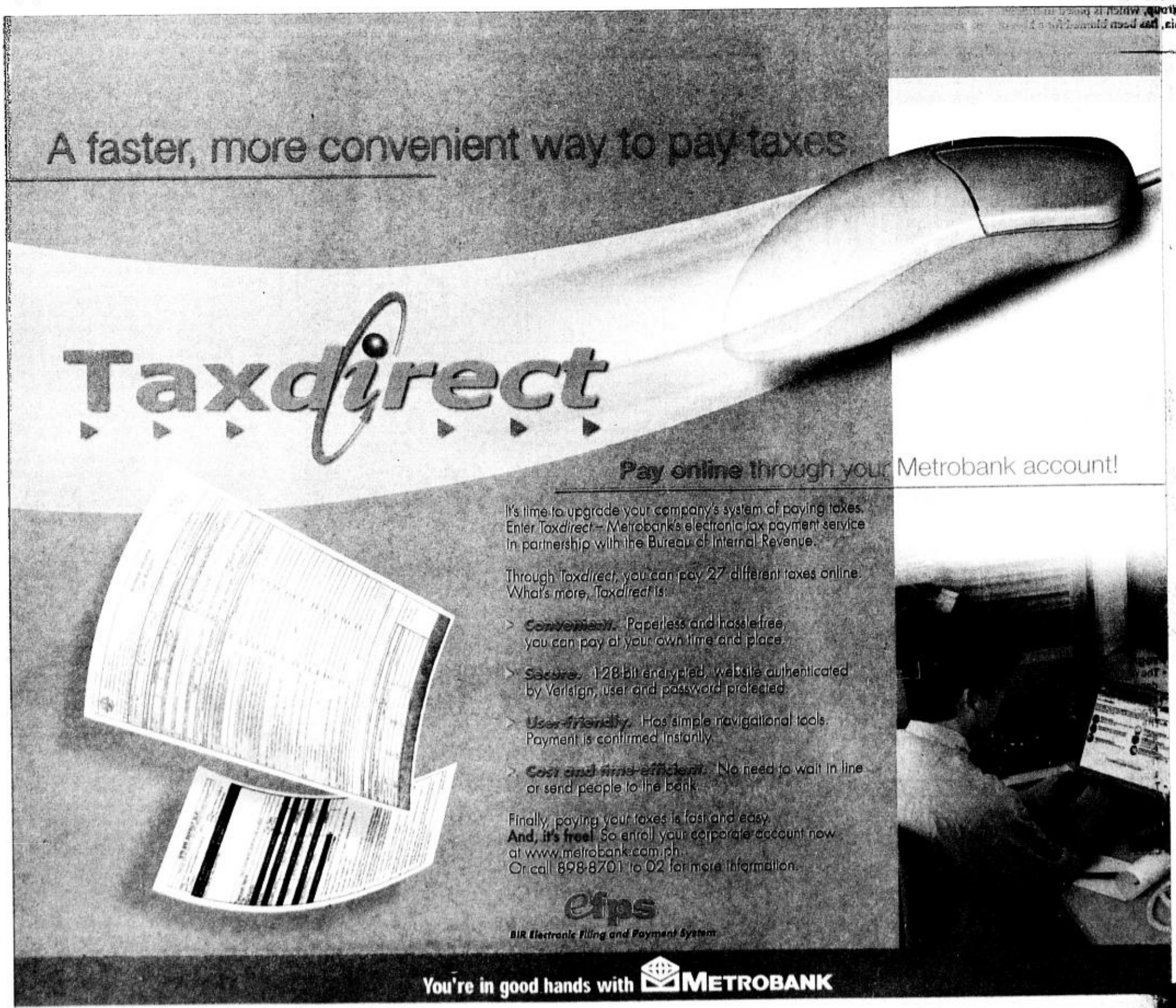

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Bush OKs new anti-spy strategy

WASHINGTON—US President George W. Bush has approved a new strategy to combat foreign spies or extremists attempting to steal US secrets and influence US policy, officials said Monday.

The national counterintelligence strategy also aims to "ensure a level economic playing field" by protecting US trade secrets and technology from foreign spies, according to a summary made public Monday.

"This strategy is the first of its kind and will require substantial changes in the conduct of US counterintelligence," said Michelle Van Cleave, the national counterintelligence executive in charge of the effort.

"These changes include a renewed intelligence focus on hostile services and intelligence capabilities, including those of terrorist groups, and proactive efforts to defeat them," she said in a statement.

Counterintelligence operations that traditionally have been scattered across a variety of government agencies would be brought under the direction of Van Cleave, who reports to the new national intelligence director, John Negroponte, the former US ambassador to Iraq.

"US counterintelligence will shift from a reactive posture to a proactive strategy of seizing advantage," the summary said.

Rather than pursue spy cases piecemeal, US counterintelligence would be conducted as a concerted government-wide effort driven by assessments of an adversary's presence, capabilities and intentions, the summary said.

"This requires looking beyond customary targets, such as known intelligence officers, to a larger population of foreign visitors and others whose activities suggest they might be involved in intelligence collection activities against the United States," it said.

The new strategy also calls for greater efforts to protect US technology, including closer cooperation with the US private sector. *AFP*

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DAY01(27 APR) MANILA / INCHEON (-/-/D)
ARRIVAL INCHEON AIRPORT, MEET AND GREET BY THE FRIENDLY TOUR GUIDE THEN TRANSFER TO INCHEON, AFTER DINNER, HOTEL CHECK IN.
DAY02(28 APR) INCHEON / MUEUI ISLAND / EVERLAND / SUANBO (B/L/D)
AFTER BREAKFAST, VISIT TO MUEUI ISLAND(DRAMA SHOOTING PLACE)SEE THE SHOOTING PLACES OF "STAIRWAY TO HEAVEN", TRANSFER TO EVERLAND WITH BIG STKTS,THE LARGEST OUTDOOR THEME PARK OF SEOUL. TRANSFER TO SUANBO, HOTEL CHECK IN
DAY03(29 APR) SUANBO / SEOUL (B/L/D)
AFTER BREAKFAST, ENJOY AQUA WORLD WATERTHEME PARK AT DAEMYUNG RESORT, VISIT TO CHUNGJU LAKE HAVE A RIVER CRUISE, BACK TO SEOUL, SHOPPING AT DONGDAEMUN MARKET, AFTER DINNER TRY YOUR LUCK AT WALKERHILL CASINO AND HOTEL CHECK IN
DAY04(30 APR) SEOUL CITY TOUR (B/L/D)
AFTER BREAKFAST, HAVE A VIEW OF THE SEOUL CITY VISIT THE KYONGBOK PALACE, FOLK MUSEUM, BLUE HOUSE, THEN VISIT THE DUTY FREE GINSENG CENTER, AMETHYST FACTORY, LOTTE WORLD WITH BIG STKTS, THE LARGEST OUTDOOR THEME PARK HOTEL CHECK IN
DAY05(01 MAY) SEOUL / MANILA (B/L/-)
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A swan is followed by a duck Monday in a pond in Copenhagen, Denmark. On April 2, Copenhagen will celebrate the 200th anniversary of the birth of Hans Christian Andersen, who penned such classic tales as "The Little Mermaid," "The Ugly Duckling," and "The Emperor's New Clothes." AP

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NOTICE OF 33rd ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

NOTICE IS HEREBY MADE that the **Armed Forces and Police Savings and Loan Association, Inc. (AFPSLAI)** will hold its 33rd Annual Membership Meeting on 30 April 2005, Saturday at 8:00 AM at the Bulwagang Hen Arturo T. Enrile (AFP Museum and Multi-Purpose Theater), Camp Aguinaldo, Quezon City to elect the members of the Board of Trustees for the year 2005-2006 and to transact other business.

(Sgd.) Atty. Samuel B. Padilla
Corporate Secretary

Pentagon to create robot surgeon to treat soldiers

WASHINGTON—Before the Terminator, the US military is looking to hire the Operator, a top-notch battlefield surgeon. But those made of flesh and blood need not apply.

A contract awarded by the Pentagon to a consortium of universities and high-tech firms on Monday calls for creating a versatile robot able to perform life-saving surgery on wounded soldiers right on the battlefield.

"The result will be a major step forward in saving lives on the battlefield," said Scott Seaton, an executive director with SRI International, a company that will be the lead contractor on the $12-million, two-year project.

He said his Silicon Valley-based firm has a long history of meeting America's defense needs, "and this program continues in that tradition."

The request comes amid mounting military casualties in Iraq and Afghanistan, where US troops are trying to hunt down Islamic militants.

The two wars have already claimed the lives of 1,686 US servicemen and left a total 11,877 others wounded, according to the latest defense department figures.

The wounds of more than half of those hurt turn out to be serious enough that they require extended treatment.

If everything works according to plan, the "trauma pod," as the robotic surgical system is called, will be able to stabilize injured soldiers within minutes and administer medical and surgical care prior to or during evacuation.

The concept is a step up from the Da Vinci surgical system approved by the US government five years ago and already used in dozens of hospitals, officials said.

When using it, the surgeon is seated comfortably at a console away from the operating table.

Viewing a three-dimensional image of his target, the doctor relies on master controls to operate robotic arms that respond to every movement of his hands, wrists and fingers and wield surgical instruments inside the patient according to his wishes.

The Da Vinci system has proven to be successful for some of the most complicated types of surgery because it often allows doctors to minimize incisions, reducing post-operative trauma.

Scientists believe this surgery by remote control could now be transferred to the battlefield.

When fully developed, the "trauma pod" will dramatically reduce the need for human medical personnel on the battlefield, officials said.

It will be small enough to be carried by most army vehicles or a helicopter. A doctor will use a system of surgical manipulators to operate from a remote location via video link.

One of the major challenges, according to scientists, will be to make these video links stable and reliable enough and to teach the robot to change instruments without the help of a nurse.

The contractors on the project also include General Dynamics, the Oak Ridge National Laboratory, and the Universities of Texas, Maryland and Washington. *AFP*

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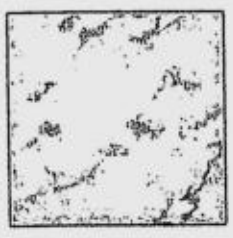

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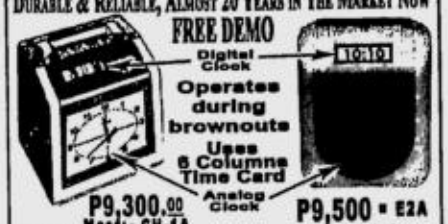

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Long division, fractions, and the things that truly count.

Mr. Lao exhaled a whispered prayer as he opened the envelope. He knew that inside, his son Raymund's latest grades would be waiting, and he wasn't too hopeful. Raymund hadn't been doing well since early in the school year and he could see no reason for things to be better this quarter. "He lacks concentration," his teacher said. "It's like when he sees numbers he turns away so he can look at other things instead." Mr. Lao closed the envelope again.

"Pare, don't worry. Raymund will be fine. I used to hate math myself. And I'm a banker." That's what Ernie had told Mr. Lao over coffee as they studied the latest financials of Mr. Lao's linen business. Ernie was Mr. Lao's banker at iBank. He took care of Mr. Lao's corporate account, and was used to dropping by his office to facilitate transactions. "Maybe I can find a tutor for him," Ernie offered.

Mr. Lao had wanted to say "Thanks, but I've already tried and no tutor wants to take him on. They're too concerned about helping students who are already doing well. Besides it's too late in the year."

But he didn't say that. Something in Ernie's manner sparked a sense of hope in Mr. Lao. So instead, "Thanks, Ernie. I'd really appreciate it."

And Ernie did find a tutor. "She helps my sister's son with his math lessons, too, so she knows what she's doing. Besides, she's really patient. Mahusay talaga," he explained.

Mr. Lao had been really thankful then. Specially when he saw the renewed eagerness with which Raymund tackled even the trickiest fractions.

"You didn't have to, Ernie. But thank you so much. Salamat."

"Anything to help, sir."

But that was a semester ago. And today, Mr. Lao fumbled nervously with the envelope. "I'll have to recommend him to transfer schools if his grades don't get better," the teacher had said. Mr. Lao drew out the card. Amid a jumble of mid to high line of eights it stood out rather plainly:

Math: 93.

Raymund had apparently done his job. So had the tutor. And Ernie as well.

Chuckling at his own lack of faith, Mr. Lao got up, and got ready to drop by the bank.

He had some thank yous to make.

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Iraq parliament session delayed

IN THIS undated photo, US Army Explosive Ordnance Disposal Team members from the 150th Engineer Battalion, 155th Brigade Combat Team prepare to destroy part of a large cache of weapons recovered recently near Forward Operating Base Dogwood, in Iraq. AP

BAGHDAD—Iraqi politicians delayed the start of a session of parliament on Tuesday for last-minute talks to try to overcome a damaging impasse over forming a government two months after historic elections.

Officials said the sitting, the second since the assembly was elected, would now start at midday after talks to try to reach a deal on who would be parliament speaker.

The Shiite Islamist alliance that came top in the election and the Kurdish coalition that came second have been haggling for weeks over Cabinet posts and the principles that should guide the new government, but little progress has been made.

Officials had hoped at least to appoint a speaker and two deputies on Tuesday, a basic step that would allow the parliament to start discussing issues even if no government was in place. But consensus was still proving elusive.

Shiites and Kurds have proposed appointing a Sunni Arab as speaker, part of their efforts to reach out to the minority that dominated Iraq under Saddam Hussein but has been left with little political representation after many Sunnis stayed away from the January elections due to intimidation or anger.

One candidate suggested for the position, current interim President Ghazi al-Yawar, has rejected it, aides say. Officials have been unable to agree on an alternative candidate.

Hoshiyar Zebari, Iraq's foreign minister and a key Kurdish negotiator, said Sunni Arabs in the assembly had been invited to propose a speaker, and it was hoped they would reach consensus.

Another possible candidate was Fawaz al-Jarba, a Sunni Arab who joined the mainly Shiite alliance. But some leading politicians said that since he was seen as the candidate of that alliance, he would not be favored.

Officials said the assembly would probably hold a vote to choose between Jarba and an alternative candidate. The Shi'ite alliance could force the appointment of a speaker on a simple majority vote, but all parties would prefer a consensus.

Once a speaker is agreed, the 275-member National Assembly's next task will be to elect a president and two vice presidents.

Two-thirds majorities are needed for that, which will mean the Shiites and Kurds must reach a deal to muster enough votes.

The presidential triumvirate will choose a prime minister, who will then appoint a Cabinet.

Hussein al-Shahristani, a Shiite nuclear scientist who spent 12 years in Saddam's jails, was expected to be named as one of the deputy speakers.

The Shiites and Kurds have broad agreement that Shiite Ibrahim Jaafari will be the next prime minister with veteran Kurdish politician Jalal Talabani taking the president's post.

The two vice presidents are expected to be interim Finance Minister Adel Abdul Mahdi, a Shiite, and the Sunni Arab Yawar.

But officials have not agreed on the distribution of cabinet posts. The Kurds are expected to retain the foreign ministry, with the defence ministry going to a Sunni Arab. But the key oil ministry is a source of disagreement—the Kurds covet it, but the Shiite alliance insists it should get the ministry.

Cracks are also appearing within the Shiite alliance, with some members voicing doubts about Jaafari. *Reuters*

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20 protesters abbed in Nepal

MANDU—Police in Nepal have arrested about 120 activists defied a ban on demonstrations against the royal govern- to protest last month's seizure of power by the king.

any of the protesters rallied Monday outside the Cen- Secretariat, which houses the prime minister's office ell-as several other ministries and government offices e capital, Katmandu.

Down with autocracy. We want democracy," the onstrators chanted as they threw fliers in the streets ng people to join their movement.

ney arrived in a public bus and quickly pulled out political flags and chanted antigovernment slogans, surprising olice. They were able to block traffic for a few minutes e police dragged them into vans and drove them away.

fficials said police detained about 50 protesters in andu and charged them with violating government rs. They said 72 more were arrested in nine other s, officials said.

was the first time since King Gyanendra's Feb. 1 over and suspension of civil liberties that protesters been able to demonstrate so close to the govern- t's main offices. *AP*

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OPINION

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Humiliation

EDITORIAL

MARLENE Garcia Esperat is the fourth journalist to be murdered this year. The 45-year-old columnist of the Midland Review in Tacurong City, Sultan Kudarat, was a chemist employed by the Department of Agriculture until she resigned in 2004. She then became an anti-corruption crusader.

Esperat was gunned down in her own home, in front of her children. She had allowed her security detail to go on vacation for Easter, a time when even the military and rebel groups refrain from taking up arms. It was obviously an active time for assassins.

Esperat's death points to the desperation felt by officials or their allied goons, who cannot "handle" allegations of graft in the tried and tested ways usually employed by erring public servants. As Carlos Conde, secretary general of the National Union of Journalists, pointed out in a recent statement, "When citizens feel helpless in the face of official corruption, they often turn to the media as a last recourse for the pursuit of redress." Once out in the open, exposés and allegations are difficult to cover up. The result is hired assassins are paid, or simply instructed, to cut down media whistle-blowers.

Conde has issued a challenge to the government: "When journalists are killed because of their particular brand of public service, and when the government fails to bring their killers to justice, it gives the lie to the administration's reformist claims."

The challenge comes in the wake of President Macapagal-Arroyo's pledge to have a "thorough investigation" out of the killing of Esperat. In response, the Philippine National Police has set up a special task force headed by Senior Supt. Rodolfo Mendoza and Chief Supt. Antonio Billones, regional police chief of Western Mindanao.

At first, the police reaction to the killing seemed quite guarded. "We are still establishing the motive for the killing but we are not discounting it could have been due to her work. She has been writing hard-hitting commentaries," the NUJP quoted the Tacurong City police chief as saying. This underwhelming, equivocal response to a brutal murder has been somewhat compensated by the PNP's release of artist's sketches of two alleged assassins.

As we have said before, while catching the killers is a matter of urgency, making sure media practitioners who incur the ire of officials don't die because of what they write or utter is of even higher importance. Demanding justice for media slayings is not a matter of preference for a particular profession, but rather a reminder of the basic obligation of the state to safeguard all its citizens. Killers who murder journalists with impunity will have no compunctions about murdering those who cannot have recourse to media or the outraged lobbying of brethren in the media profession.

A society led by people who are so afraid of the written or spoken word, and yet so cowardly they cannot confront allegations in court, is a society doomed to never rising above the law of the jungle. Present conditions in this country disprove the saying that the pen is mightier than the sword; and yet ironically, the same conditions guarantee that for every ruthless assassination of a journalist, media practitioners will be that much more merciless in their exposés of criminal and ethical official wrongdoing. After all, if this is going to be a fight to the death, a journalist has one consolation an erring official can never have: words can, indeed, live on. As can the examples of intrepid practitioners of the profession.

At a time when the country is trying to put its best foot forward for the conference of world parliamentarians, the focus of the news will surely shift to the plight of persecuted journalists in our country. Reporters Without Borders will conduct a fact-finding visit to the Philippines from April 7 to 13 concerned, above all, with investigating the murders of journalists. The visit comes on the heels of previous statements of concern and past investigations by media practitioners, pointing to the grisly tendencies of local government officials and their thugs.

This is not just a black eye for press freedom. It is yet another humiliation for a country that professes to be free.

Foreign pharma firms abusing patent rights

AS I SEE IT

Neal H. Cruz

(Continued from last Monday)

THERE are two main reasons why medicines in the Philippines are overpriced, in fact, the highest priced in Asia and most of the rest of the world. One is that the pharmaceutical industry here is controlled by a cartel of multinational companies whose guiding principle is greed, which is ironic for an industry that is supposed to be humanitarian, and is supposed to save lives and cure diseases. The other is the abuse of the law on patents.

Because it is a cartel against which the Filipino public is helpless, it can dictate prices. There is no competition among its members. In fact, although there are a number of different companies, only one firm manufactures their many different medicines. Moreover, 70 percent of their products are retailed by only one giant drugstore chain. The relationships among them is that cozy.

As I stated in the previous column, the parent companies of these giant multinational pharmaceutical firms impose on their Philippine subsidiaries a mark-up profit that the latter must ensure as a condition to their continued presence in the country. The subsidiaries, in turn, ensure their profitability by imposing their own unrestrained mark-up. In turn, the retailers are allowed a 10-percent mark-up.

But here is the shocking part. In his privilege speech before the House of Representatives last March 1, Iloilo Rep. Ferjenel G. Biron revealed that even these giant multinationals are being pressured by the country's largest drugstore chain that "demands an automatic 20 to 30 percent discount (in the form of either straight discount or free goods or a combination of both) as a precondition for the latter to carry the former's products in its nationwide retail network. This discount is on top of the usual volume discounts plus the 10-percent retail mark-up enjoyed by this drugstore chain."

And why not? After all, it has a near-monopoly of the retail market for medicines. Many of the small, family-owned drugstores have already been pushed aside by this giant chain.

Therefore, the pharmaceutical firms jack up their transfer prices to compensate for the 20- to 30-percent discount to this retail chain. Simply stated, the cost of medicines here is overpriced by at least 20 to 30 percent, if we go by the rule that a 10-percent mark-up is normal. That is why when you buy medicine, you are shocked by the astronomical price. Many sick Filipinos are unable to take their medicines because they cannot afford them.

Biron's solution to this unconscionable double or triple overpricing by a cartel and a retail monopoly is price control. His bill seeks to create another government agency to regulate drug prices.

Another reason the cartel can get away with its overpricing is the abuse of the law on patents.

A patent by itself is good. It protects products from unlawful encroachments and encourages research. It enables the inventor or discoverer to enjoy the fruits of his labor and assures recovery of the costs.

However, patents create a monopoly which enables patent-holders to dictate prices and raise them to outrageous heights. This is what is now happening here where life-saving and life-sustaining patent-protected medicines are beyond the reach of most Filipinos.

Worse, this patent right is often abused. Even when a patent has expired, usually after 20 years of being exploited and yielding profits, patent holders resort to clever legal manipulations to prolong their hold on the patent and squeeze more profits. These include making misrepresentations against Filipino drug manufacturers who want to produce their own brands or generic versions of the product concerned. Such claims are largely groundless and are merely dilatory.

This abuse perpetrated by big multinationals in Third World countries prevents Filipino pharmaceutical companies from manufacturing similar high quality but cheaper products using the same ingredients, obtained in the free market, but using a different manufacturing process. In rare instances when local drug firms were able to do so, in spite of barriers put up by patent holders, the multinational drug firms are forced to reduce their prices by as much as 50 percent rather than lose their market altogether.

To illustrate: People with cardiovascular diseases have to take anti-cholesterol drugs like statins every day. Anti-cholesterol treatment is long-term; one has to count years before clinical benefits set in. The leading statins are Lipitor (made by Pfizer) and Zocor (Merck). The price of Lipitor is 69 for 10 mg, P83.25 for 20 mg, P98.90 for 40 mg, and P109.25 for 80 mg. Zocor's corresponding prices are P65.25 for the 10 mg and 20 mg capsules, P81.50 for 40 mg and P94.50 for 80 mg.

In 2002, a Filipino firm, United Laboratories, launched Vidastat that has the same molecule as Zocor but is 50 percent cheaper. Unilab sold its 10 mg capsule at only P25, P25.75 for 20 mg and P45 for 40 mg.

This forced Pfizer to lower the price of the 10 mg Lipitor to P54 and the 20, 40, and 80 mg capsule to a uniform P64. Merck, on the other hand, lowered the price of Zocor, regardless of milligram, to a uniform P41.

Based on actual 2003 sales in the statin market, the entry of the cheaper Vidastat saved Philippine society P208.8 million because Pfizer and Merck were forced to cut the prices of their statins by an average of 50 percent. Were it not for Unilab, the foreign-owned firms would still be charging outrageously high prices.

But what it clearly shows is how much the multinationals are overpricing their medicines.

Vat out of our lives

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

SOME weeks ago, I saw a friend of mine I hadn't seen in years. She told me she had been in Hong Kong working for a publication. It wasn't very rewarding psychically, which was why she decided to come home after some time, but it was so financially, which was why it took her that long to do so.

Taxes bit into her income, she said, but she still had enough to spare—certainly more than what was left after taxes in this country. She took the public transport to and from her place of work and had to walk some distance to her apartment in a modest part of the city. Happily, though she often had to do so late at night, after doing overtime, she never feared for her safety. The streets were well lit and patrolled, and people had better things to do than mug other people. She never once felt threatened during the occasions she did that. Eventually, it became a matter of natural expectation: you simply did not expect someone to jump out of the bushes to declare a holdup.

Somehow, she said, it consoled you for paying taxes. At least, the money taken away from you went to making the streets safe, quite apart from making public transport comfortable and efficient. What you gave away came back to you in the form of very tangible public service. She finally got to understand what the phrase meant. It had no meaning where she came from.

I thought of that when I was greeted last Easter Sunday with the news that GMA and her friends in Congress were determined to ram through an increased VAT before the week was out. Indeed, when I was greeted with GMA's Easter message, which likened her labors in instituting fiscal reforms to Christ's sufferings and the approval of the VAT hike as the path to national resurrection. I was reminded of martial law when Marcos also kept comparing the national misery to Christ's passion and his epic struggle to pluck the country from it to the resurrection. The people, of course, kept comparing their suffering to that of Christ and Marcos' overthrow to the resurrection. History soon proved which parallelism was right.

The UP economists have suggested that a VAT hike is essential to keeping the country afloat. It's not true, they say, that the country is out of the woods fiscally. The threat of a financial collapse remains, and that is something that can be prevented by more taxes, among other things. Well, that argument presumes two things, neither of which is borne out by reality.

The first is that increasing the VAT has an egalitarian or democratic or—a principle rightly used in taxation—progressive basis. I personally would not mind paying my taxes (and I have no choice anyway since it's automatically loped off my pay), if I knew that other people, notably those who earn infinitely more than me, pay theirs. Why should I want to pay my taxes rightly, or at all, if I knew that the cronies, past and present, have not, and are not, paying what they ought to?

The humongous uncollected taxes, not least from the existing VAT, show precisely that other people are not doing so. The booksellers, who are protesting the inclusion of books in the VAT (there and then you see how it is the product of ignorant minds) have pointed that out. There is no need to increase VAT, all government has to do is collect what should be collected: "In 2003, the National Tax Research Center estimated a loss of P127 billion a year from uncollected taxes and VAT from 1998-2002, or a total of P635 billion over five years.... Of the NTRC yearly loss estimate, P41.6 billion, one-third of uncollected taxes, was from uncollected VAT."

Why should I pay more just because government can't collect right? What makes it especially bitter in the case of books is that what could go to improve the mind of Juan de la Cruz will only go to engorge the pockets of Jose Pidal.

Which brings me to the second and even more important point: Why on earth should we imagine that the taxes we pay will go to us and not merely to the Sheriff of Nottingham? I personally would not mind paying taxes if, like my friend who worked in Hong Kong, I can walk in dark places in the middle of the night without having to fear for my life. Or drive down Edsa without having to curse the blobs of cement that are interminably spattered to cover gaping cracks and potholes. You come home to this country, you are immediately reminded of where your taxes went in the horrendously embarrassing state of the national airport.

We see no end of TV ads about the need to pay taxes, alongside warnings of dire things to befall us if we don't. We do not see from the other end ads reminding government officials not to steal those taxes, alongside open invitations for vigilantes to tie a rope around their necks when they do. Only recently, PERC ranked the country the second most corrupt in all of Asia, second only to Indonesia. And Jakarta has a grand airport leading to a magnificent avenue! It's not just that government officials steal our money, it's that they take it out of the country. But that's another story.

What does corruption mean but that we are not paying taxes but tribute, no more and no less than that yielded by serfs to the lord of the manor? Only recently, too, we saw the spectacle of congressmen flying to Las Vegas to cheer Manny Pacquiao and lay bets on the side. I did not know whether to laugh or cry at the text message that said, sorry, we are now bankrupt, we have to borrow from Mexico which has all our money.

First, show you'll use taxes right—or even more elementally, first show you won't steal the damned thing—then, and only then, raise taxes. As I keep saying, GMA is taking a huge gamble demanding that we pay more taxes. The way things are, she should be thankful we still do.

Timely intervention

ANALYSIS

Amando Doronila

THE PAPER on the value-added tax amendments issued by the 11 University of the Philippines economists during the relative calm of Good Friday came as a timely intervention to extricate the VAT bill from the two-month impasse over the Senate and House versions of the bill. The UP economists regard the bill as the only significant revenue reform measure pending in Congress out of the eight urgent tax measures proposed last July by the newly elected President Macapagal-Arroyo.

The paper was issued ahead of the three-day special session of Congress which starts today. The special session was called by the President in an effort to break the deadlock, with a warning that further delay in its passage by the Senate would result in disastrous setbacks in bringing back the country to fiscal stability and giving momentum to economic growth.

The impact of the UP 11 paper was to focus the debate over ways to battle the fiscal crisis on the VAT reform legislation. It underlined the sharp differences between the House and Senate versions of the bill and impressed the critical need to put an end to the seemingly endless legislative squabble that is cluttering the bill with peripheral issues.

The paper titled, "The economy on the cusp: the proposed amendments and their larger economic significance," came seven months after the same group warned that the economy would face collapse in two years unless the government curbed the public sector deficit and debt by adopting revenue and cost-saving measures. In an apparently even-handed apportionment of criticism of the executive and legislative departments' response to the crisis, the paper said that contrary to government claims, the country was still in a fiscal crisis, but warned that the shape of the VAT measure that Congress would frame this week would determine whether the country would "remain in its sickbed."

"Without a credible law that increases the VAT rate now, the government's fiscal reform program has no leg to stand on," the paper said. The paper pointed out that because four of the revenue measures proposed by the administration had been dropped, the VAT amendment was the only significant revenue measure still pending in Congress. Of the eight, two have been passed by Congress in an output embarrassing both to the administration and Congress, where the former has a commanding majority: the excise tax on alcohol and tobacco products, and the so-called lateral attrition law, which the UP professors said had insignificant impact. The administration has trimmed its tax reform package by dropping the tax on telecommunications, the excise tax on petroleum products, and adoption of a gross income tax and a general tax amnesty.

From the hard-core measures after the contraction of the revenue agenda, the administration could expect, according to the paper of the UP 11, a total of P41.7 billion in revenues from the three measures (P30 billion from VAT, P5 billion in fiscal incentives and P6.7 billion from "sin" taxes), down from the P97 billion to P122 billion that it had projected in 2004. The group said the P41.7 billion was barely sufficient to meet the P54 billion needed this year to avoid a debt default in the future and another P54 billion to restore vital social services.

These figures underline the pivotal importance of the VAT bill. The economists said the government tended to exaggerate its revenue estimates.

But the more important point is not the exaggeration, but the more dire consequences of failure to break the impasse over the VAT bill. Finance Secretary Cesar Purisima has said that every day of delay in passing the bill in the Senate, some P165 million is lost in revenues.

What the delay tells us is that the effort to find a compromise formula to reconcile the House and Senate versions of the bill has its own costs. It is obvious that foot-dragging, on the excuse that giving more time for discussion would yield a compromise bill that would accommodate a wide range of "national or public interests," could lead to worse results than what are now being debated as deleterious to public interest.

The UP economists' paper on VAT said they "continue to hold as a bare minimum an increase in the VAT rate from 10 percent to 12 percent is an inevitable and basic component of any adequate formula to address the fiscal crisis." The President has asked Congress to increase the VAT rate to 12 percent from the current 10 percent and the House has approved two bills increasing the VAT rate to 12 percent and imposing a multi-tiered VAT on some sectors that are at present exempted. On the other hand, the Senate has rejected the President's proposal and insists on keeping the VAT rate at 10 percent while lifting certain exemptions and increasing the corporate income tax to 35 percent from 32 percent.

Former Budget Secretary Benjamin Diokno, a member of the group of 11 UP economists, said the inclusion of non-VAT related measures in the bill drawn by the Senate may only prolong debate on the issue.

"The inclusion of non-VAT related items is particularly deplorable, first, since they unnecessarily give up revenues already earned by the government; but secondly, they risk placing the process in a legal limbo," the UP paper said. "The farther the bill deviates from and improvises on the bills already passed by the House, the greater the likelihood that constitutional questions will be raised and that the emanating law will be challenged in the course, creating logjam on the issue that the economy can ill afford."

The paper noted the inclusion of non-VAT measures in the Senate version which includes raising corporate income tax and deleting the 3-percent tax on quarterly gross receipts of international air carriers doing business in the Philippines.

Where have all the fathers gone?

PINOY KASI

Michael L. Tan

WHEN asked how many children they have, Asian men like to joke, "From which wife?" Filipinos are even more explicit with their displays of machismo: "*Apat, lahat panganay.*" Claiming that one has fathered four (or five, or six) children, all of them "the eldest," implies that our Don Juan is the master escape artist, able to sow his wild oats without being tied down to one woman.

I never thought those replies were funny or witty, and some recent encounters with missing fathers convince me even more that such remarks, even when said in jest, are in extremely bad taste. We—individual offspring, households, communities, even the nation—suffer terribly from irresponsible fatherhood. To underscore my point, I'll share two recent encounters with problematic fathers and then end with rather intriguing statistics about fatherhood in the Philippines, from the 2003 National Demographic and Health Survey.

Pacman first

The first incident revolves around a close friend who had gotten deep into drugs. In a way, it was not surprising, the drugs being only a symptom of his problems with a dysfunctional family. He had never seen his biological father, his childhood marked by endless moving from one household to another, raised by aunts, his maternal grandmother and, in the end, his mother and stepfather.

Right before Holy Week, I got a call from his stepfather. The inevitable had happened, my friend had suffered some kind of reaction to *shabu* (metamphetamine) taken during the wee hours of the morning. I advised the stepfather to rush my friend to a hospital and told him I'd follow. But no, the stepfather appealed, "You be the one, Mike. I wouldn't know what to do in the hospital."

I rushed over to their home to find my friend doubled up in pain, suffering from abdominal and chest pains and yet refusing to go to the hospital, fearful that the doctors would find out he was into drugs and he would end up being incarcerated.

In the end, unable to endure the pain, he agreed to go to the hospital. His parents (mother and stepfather) watched passively as he tried to pack his things. They didn't go with us.

I had him admitted for detoxification, but the hospital said I could only sign the admission form as a temporary measure; they needed a parent's signature. I promised to bring the parents the next day, which I did. Visitors were not allowed, which was just as well—they kept fretting about wanting to get back home to catch Pacman, the Manny Pacquiao fight.

Present, but absent

Let's move to another incident. Only three weeks earlier, this friend had called me in the middle of the night, explaining that a friend of his was desperately in need of funds because his wife was about to deliver. I responded immediately, driving over to the hospital.

Here was a father-to-be who was present but absent. He was passive, leaving the talking to his mother-in-law who went into a long sob story about poverty. I cut her short and asked for the bill. She gave me a prescription for several drugs needed for the delivery, which would amount to about P1,000. She also gave me a slip of paper indicating the admission charge of P110. I realized they hadn't even paid that admission charge.

Later, I found out from the talkative mother-in-law that one of the doctors had hectored them: "A pregnancy isn't like some accident or emergency. It takes nine months, which should have been enough time for you to prepare the money needed for the hospital."

"Ay, but we have nothing," the mother-in-law tried to argue her way out.

I asked if her son-in-law was working. Silly question, of course; I don't think he could even spell "*trabaho*."

When they asked for more financial help, I had to say no. A friend of mine, also from an urban poor community, told me later I made the right decision. He was angry about what had happened. "Tell that stupid father if he were a real man he should have started working long before the baby arrived," he said.

Stick to two

But how many of our men understand that fatherhood is more than making a baby?

The 2003 National Demographic Health Survey (NDHS) has some revealing statistics, which actually contradict the bragging men do about paternity. In the survey, women aged 15 to 49 reported having an average of 2.18 children while the men reported only an average of 1.72 children.

I know we need to do more statistical analysis of the NDHS and even conduct additional research, but the discrepancy that came out in the 2003 survey is no small matter. I did some quick extrapolations and found that for that 15 to 49 age group of parents, we would need to account for some five million children with missing fathers. I don't think we can account for all of them simply as fathers who have died, or are over the age of 50 or aliens (men not residing in the Philippines, including, no, I don't want to even think about it).

The problem isn't just one of hit-and-run fathers. Even the men who acknowledge their paternity and stick around may not necessarily be that much more responsible. The woman in labor that I mentioned earlier was 23 years old, and delivering her fourth child. She worked, too, the first six months of the pregnancy while her husband was idle. The rest of her pregnancy it was the mother-in-law who supported the family.

We need sexuality education, not just in terms of explaining the birds and bees but also of responsible parenting. This is especially crucial for our young males, who grow up with the most distorted values about sex and gender roles and sexuality.

We can't leave education on sexuality and responsible parenting to homes, given our many problematic families. Granted your immediate family may be fine, but I can say with 100-percent certainty there is no clan without skeletons in the closet, involving philanderers and absconding fathers (or mothers).

Then, too, there's society at large. We lionize men who father children left and right, even electing them president and senators.

Young people know what's going on, picking up cues about these social norms. The drug dependent I talked about earlier believes fidelity is a myth and no wonder, one of his male cousins once boasted to me that in their clan, their males' motto is "Stick to two." He meant wives, not children.

There are, no doubt, many role models out there for fatherhood but we hear too little from or about them, especially when they break the mold to become active and nurturing parents and faithful spouses. Let's hear, too, from the men who have redefined fatherhood to transcend biology. Maybe we should move Father's Day to March 19, the feast of St. Joseph, honoring a man who raised a son that wasn't his own genetically. He did a fairly good job, if you look at what happened to that son.

Recalling lessons from the tsunami

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

DISTRESSING indeed is the news that a new earthquake, of a magnitude of 8.7, has struck off the western coast of Sumatra, in the general area where, three months ago, a more powerful tremor struck and triggered the "killer tsunami" that took an estimated 270,000 lives.

Fortunately, as I write this, there have been no reports of new tsunami threats or incidents, although Indonesian authorities say almost 300 people have been reported to have died on the island of Nias, said to be a popular surfing spot.

The new disaster brings back memories of the tsunami disaster, lessons from which governments and international agencies are still gathering and applying. One of the more glaring lessons learned is that, while natural disasters can be said to affect everyone equally—rich or poor, humble or exalted, young or old—the impact and scale of victimization is not distributed or felt evenly. The most obvious division appears to be gender, with women and girls bearing a disproportionate share of deaths and injuries, suffering and violence.

In a report issued just recently, the British-based charity Oxfam International said December's tsunami killed three times more women than men, with the resulting scarcity of women survivors perhaps accounting for fresh reports of forced marriages and rape.

"The impact on women was seen especially in Sri Lanka, Indonesia and India. Indonesia, the country hardest hit by the earthquake-generated tsunami, now has villages where men outnumber women 10-to-1," the report noted.

"The tsunami has dealt a crushing blow to women and men across the region. In some villages it now appears that up to 80 percent of those killed were women," said Becky Buel, Oxfam's policy director. "This disproportionate impact will lead to problems for years to come unless everyone working on the aid effort addresses the issue now. We are already hearing about rapes, harassment and forced early marriages."

* * *

CONSISTENT with findings of other agencies, the report concluded that women suffered disproportionately "because they had a more difficult time outrunning the surging waters or the bad luck of being at home while the men were out at sea fishing or in the fields working."

The report found that because of the skewed death ratio, men now far outnumber women in crowded camps and scattered settlements, and the women "are vulnerable to a range of abuses." Sri Lankan women reportedly have been sexually assaulted in camp toilets and domestic violence is on the rise.

In a story based on the Oxfam report, the Associated Press said Indonesian women are being sexually harassed in camps, forced or rushed into marrying much older men and victimized by abusive Indonesian soldiers, who reportedly have strip-searched them.

"We know of at least three marriages in which women married older widowers. What we don't know is how forced it was," said Ines Smyth, gender adviser for Oxfam.

"When we asked them, they say they have an obligation to their family and were frightened for the future. If you lost everything you had, including your family, it's very difficult to refuse whatever is being offered, whether it's protection or the possibility of a house."

Indonesian activists claim it is difficult to get women to talk about the abuse or report it to authorities, the AP report said. The few women left in coastal settlements interviewed said they were unaware of any abuse, and they were focusing on rebuilding their lives.

* * *

A POSSIBLE consequence of such massive loss of women's lives could be the revaluation of women's role in the lives of their families and communities. What will the disappearance of women mean to the ruined villages?

Activists say such radical changes in a village's population will likely alter a community for good, "with men put in a difficult position of leaving a village to restart a family or bringing newcomers into what often was a very tight-knit community."

The tsunami also could adversely impact poor widowers, the report said. "Most would like to remarry and start a new family, but they have no money for the costly dowry and no immediate prospects of resuming their jobs as rice farmers, traders or fishermen."

Survivors in the devastated villages say what they miss most is "the chatter and laughter of the women," with some complaining that "there is no one to do the cooking, the washing, and most of all, to keep (us) company at night."

Given the impact of the tsunami disaster on women and girls, what can government do to better respond to the special needs and requirements of female survivors? Among the strategies suggested by aid and rescue agencies as well as NGOs is to involve and consult women from the very start, from immediate rescue and relief efforts to planning the longer-term rehabilitation and reconstruction projects.

But for this to happen, governments and agencies need to ensure better gender representation among their personnel and officers, more intensive gender-awareness orientation, and more gender-fair distribution of relief and rehabilitation funds to benefit men and women equally.

* * *

TURNING to another disaster, this one entirely of human origin, the second Abanse! Pinay Forum, on "Women, Peace and Terrorism," takes place this afternoon at four at the function room of Cravings Restaurant on the fifth floor of the Shangri-La Mall on Edsa, Mandaluyong.

Invited as resource persons are Ging Quintos Deles of the Office of the Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process and representatives of peace advocacy groups. Attendance is open to the public, though on a "pay-as-you-order" basis. Again, because space is limited, attendees are advised to come early.

One marvelous church

LOOKING BACK

Ambeth R. Ocampo

WHILE people plan their annual Holy Week vacation, I plan my *visita iglesia* covering the beautiful colonial churches that line the lakeshore: Morong, Pakil, Paete, Pagsanjan, Lumban, etc. While my favorite churches in downtown Manila are the all-steel San Sebastian Church and the impressive painted ceilings of the Abbey Church of Our Lady of Montserrat on Mendiola, a.k.a "San Beda Chapel," I decided to seek out "modern" churches this year.

At the top of the list were the Sto. Domingo Church on Quezon Boulevard, the Church of St. Andrew in Makati, and the new Church of the Gesu inside the Ateneo campus. But the church that made an impression on me was the often overlooked and forgotten Chapel of the Holy Sacrifice in UP Diliman.

Built in 1954, it may not be very old but it is worth a visit simply because the chapel saw the collaboration of four National Artists: Leandro V. Locsin (Architecture), Napoleon Abueva (Sculpture), Vicente Manansala and Arturo R. Luz (Painting). Locsin designed the chapel, Manansala did the wall-sized Stations of the Cross (assisted by another National Artist Ang Kiukok?), Luz designed the floor in terrazzo depicting the "River of Life" radiating from the altar, and Abueva made the crucifix that hangs from the unadorned dome of this unique, circular church that resembles a spaceship more than the stereotype church of spires and steeples.

Structural engineering was provided by Alfredo Juinio of the UP College of Engineering, and special lighting designed by the electrical engineer Jose Segovia (also a UP professor and later president of FEATI University). The contractor was David Consunji, who accepted the job on a budget of P150,000.

All these names are now bywords or even legends in their profession. They all got their break half a century ago when they were young and below 40. Locsin was just 25 and had yet to pass the licensure exams for architecture when he designed the chapel, his first project.

In his recently published memoirs, "A Passion to Build," Consunji explained the greatest challenge of its construction, which was how to pour and create the perfect three-inch concrete shell for the dome. He didn't use any of the machines offered by bigger companies and engineers but relied on, "our old concrete mixers, wheelbarrows and buggies, and a lot of good old common sense. I told [Juinio] that the concrete would not be poured through a chute like we normally did because that required a lot of water, which made the concrete weaker. Instead we would build four concreting towers around the dome, from which we would load the concrete. Then a scaffolding beyond the dome frame would support the conveying planks or the runway for the buggies because, instead of pouring concrete through a chute, we would bring it up just to the level where it could be manually poured. After pouring the buggy would move on to the next concreting tower, load concrete and pour. And on to the next quarter, and the next. The buggies would run only one way. Moving clockwise. That way, transporting and pouring concrete would be fast and continuous."

The process took 18 hours non-stop and was threatened by bad weather, so the UP chaplain, Fr. John P. Delaney, led students in prayer and eventually built this church on faith. A church described by Manila Archbishop (later first Filipino Cardinal) Rufino J. Santos as being "built in the idiom of our age," it can still be enjoyed today, although I wonder if the special lighting described by Fernando Zobel in an article in the 1957 issue of Liturgical Arts still works. He wrote:

"There are five shades of light in the cove at the interior base of the dome: white, green, red, yellow and blue. Intensity is adjustable. Ordinarily all the lights are on from the moment other priests enter up to the Sanctus. During the Sanctus the congregation is left in semi-darkness, and three rays of gold light from the top of the dome to the altar. After the Sanctus either all the lights are turned on again, or a cool blue is used. In Masses for the dead, purple light is used before the Sanctus instead of white. The congregation reacts very well to the sudden change that takes place during the Sanctus. The moment the lights change a great stillness invades the entire church, and everyone I have talked to says this is a great aid to devotion. I have no reason to doubt it. The spotlights concentrate the attention where attention belongs. I do not see how it could otherwise."

This church made history not only because of the stellar names connected with its creation but because it was the first round church ever erected in the Philippines as well as the first thin-shell concrete dome ever attempted in the Philippines. Based on all these and more that can be unearthed by more research perhaps, the National Museum should fast-track its declaration as a National Cultural Treasure and the National Historical Institute can declare it a National Historical Landmark and thus preserve the church as well as the deteriorating Manansala murals. Declaration as a treasure and landmark not only awards it the recognition it deserves but will retard the slow sprouting of current tacky embellishments that tend to clutter the stark simplicity and original design of this marvelous church.

* * *

Comments are welcome at aocampo@ateneo.edu

Malabon, a glimpse of our future

IF we want to know what the future holds for the 15 million urban poor in our country, we need to look no farther than Barangay Tonsuya in Malabon, where 4,000 families are being evicted. In Malabon, the government recently began to evict 4,000 poor families to make way for another mall.

With big money on the table from the upcoming mall's owners, the local and national governments, the police and, perhaps, the courts forgot all about law and equity. No relocation was offered, no warning given. Hundreds of police and demolition crew members arrived with one intent, to put the 4,000 families in the street, so work on the mall could go ahead.

The same thing happened in Mumbai (Bombay), India over the last few months, but on a much more spectacular scale. There, 90,000 families, about 500,000 men, women and children were put out without relocation. Many were injured. Miloon Kothari, UN special rapporteur on Adequate Housing writes of this eviction:

"Forget resettlement, even rules now accepted globally on the process of evictions have been thrown overboard—there's no notice, no consultation with the affected, evictions take place on Sundays, on religious days, on festival days, people's belongings are set on fire after the evictions, women are assaulted, bulldozers have demolished homes when people were still inside. This manner of behaviour from any elected government, or any government, violates a range of human rights, including the right to adequate housing."

Why did India with its fine record of promoting housing rights and its Gandhian traditions of helping the poor do such a thing? Miloon Kothari believes that Mumbai has so much new globalization wealth, so many business opportunities and challenges, and such a grandiose view of its future competing with Shanghai to be the gateway to Asia. In the rush to make more money, all housing laws and traditions have become trivial obstacles.

In present-day Philippines, only a very few have such money. Even the government doesn't have enough counterpart funds to proceed with the evictions it wants to carry out. But when the rich and government have the money, look out poor people! We used to say, "Power tends to corrupt, and absolute power tends to corrupt absolutely." We should say, perhaps, "Money tends to corrupt and big money tends to corrupt absolutely."

Malabon is a glimpse of our future.

—DENIS MURPHY,
Urban Poor Associates,
25A Mabuhay St.,
Barangay Central, Quezon City

Asking too much for too little

THIS is in reaction to the opinion of Raffy Albert of Bantay Riles on the rights of "*riles*" (railway) residents. (PDI, 3/11/05) I would accept his position, based on law, regarding their resettlement. What I find rather disturbing is the propensity of the NGOs and urban poor to demand too much and give back too little.

Albert asks: "2. Ensure that the resettlement areas are safe, secure, accessible, affordable and habitable, and provided with such basic services as roads, water, electricity and school facilities."

The "*riles*" residents right now live in a place they themselves have made unsafe and insecure. Considering the situation they're now in, I would imagine being given a plot of land or a small condominium that they can own with a little hard work is a much better proposition. But the residents hate the idea and would rather fiercely stick to their present situation.

Again, I say they demand too much yet give back too little. These are people who do not pay taxes. Their areas are known havens for criminals. They throw their thrash anywhere they please. They drive their tricycles and jeepneys with wild abandon. They elect stupid politicians. And they breed like rabbits to continue a vicious cycle and make sure it never ends.

I hope they begin to see the damage they wreak and see hope in their resettlement.

—RONALD CAGAPE,
naldcagape@yahoo.com

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER LETTERS

Eviction of Atis will be illegal

THIS is a reaction to Juan L. Mercado's column on the Atis of Boracay. (PDI, 3/15/05) The Environmental Compliance Certificate of the tourism master plan for Boracay, as applied for by the Department of Tourism in the early 1990s, requires a definite development plan for the Atis.

The point is: if the eviction of the Atis is enforced, the ECC for the master plan becomes null and void. This means all tourism activities on the island, directly or indirectly covered by the master plan, can be declared patently illegal. In such case, the environment department would be duty-bound to issue a cease and desist order to all concerned.

I know because, as associate professor at the College of Social Sciences and Philosophy, UP-Diliman, I have been with the Environmental Impact Assessment Review Committee since 1990.

As a result of our work on the Atis, one of my students did a film on the plight of the Atis in Boracay. It won the best thesis of the year at the College of Mass Communication some time in the 1990s. British Broadcasting Corp., if I am not mistaken, also made a feature film on these same Atis. I believe that both films here are available at the college.

—AGERICO M. DE VILLA,
College of Social Science and Philosophy,
UP Diliman, Quezon City

More than 'good or bad' science

THIS is a rejoinder to the letter of Tim Edgar ("Perfume ingredients not harmful," PDI, 3/15/05) in reaction to the news item, "Peril behind sweet smell." (PDI, 2/15/05)

Edgar (a deputy director of the European Council for Plasticisers and Intermediates, Plastic Additives Group, Specialty Chemicals Programme, The European Chemical Industry Council) makes it appear that this is a simple question of "good" or "bad" science or how big the dose of poison one can take in a day. Obviously, Edgar sells pthalates and behind the rhetoric, he is in fact protecting company bottom lines, and this is the crux of the debate.

He says we shouldn't worry about exposing ourselves, the people we love, and the environment to the synthetic chemicals his industry produces because there is no proof of harm. We ask, shouldn't it instead give us proof of safety? Are there no safe alternatives for these substances?

The Greenpeace report was based on an analyses done by the Netherlands-based TNO Environment and Geosciences laboratory. Aside from confirming the presence of these chemicals, it reported the levels at which these chemicals were found in the samples.

As part of an ongoing project investigating hazardous chemicals in consumer products, Greenpeace has also reviewed the actions and policies of a number of consumer goods manufacturers on potentially hazardous chemicals in their products. The good news is that a growing number of companies are taking positive steps to replace such chemicals in a variety of consumer items, ranging from sports shoes, toys, mobile phones, textiles and body care products. The bad news is that many other companies continue to disregard mounting health and environmental concerns over the chemicals added to their products. The latter group is closely linked to Edgar's industry group.

The Greenpeace report, made public since Feb. 15, can stand on its own scientific merit, and I'll leave it at that. (It may be downloaded at (http://www.greenpeace.org/tnoperfumereport. Printed copies are available at our office.)

What is more important at this point is putting in context the reaction to the study by the industry group represented by Edgar.

In the meantime, we can only offer information and words of caution and hope that Edgar is proven right, that despite the risks of living in the midst of synthetic chemicals, we need not worry about our health and environment.

—FRANCIS JOSEPH C. DELA CRUZ,
campaigner,
Greenpeace Southeast Asia,
Unit 329 Eagle Court Condominium,
Barangay Central, Quezon City

Lawful violence

I AM afraid Conrado de Quiros had seen too many movies. In his March 17 column, he compared the Camp Bagong Diwa incident to "Assault on Precinct 13," a fictional movie in which American policemen attacked a police precinct to silence a detainee and stop him from exposing police corruption. De Quiros' suggestion that the same thing might have happened in the Camp Bagong Diwa assault appalled me.

We should stick to the facts. Three notorious Abu Sayyaf detainees killed three jail guards in an attempt to escape from detention. They then barricaded themselves with other detainees inside a building, turning down calls for their surrender. The state is challenged to enforce the rule of law. That many other prisoners were killed was unfortunate. One policeman sacrificed his life in the assault.

There have also been prison breakouts and riots in other countries, resulting as well in casualties to both prisoners and law enforcers. This is a well-known fact.

The state, when challenged with lawless violence, must respond with lawful violence to protect law-abiding society. Some of these real-life events have been depicted in movies, but apparently De Quiros chose to forget them.

There are pitfalls in watching too many movies. They make you dizzy and out-of-touch with reality. Our unsolicited advice to our favorite columnist: Don't watch too many movies, at least, before writing your column.

—MAE PALOMA,
1503 Sawata Area 1,
Maypajo Caloocan City

Sex education signals caution

CERTAIN groups have been pushing for the inclusion of sex education early in the school curriculum. I absolutely agree. Adolescence is a time of transition, a time when the young mind is bombarded with so many options that invite extreme curiosity and a lot of pressures from society, peers and the media. Among these options is sex.

Teenagers try sex out of curiosity, but not safely. Sex education will take out their curiosity. By teaching them that sex is something truly natural and nothing to be ashamed of, they are given freedom to ask questions before it's too late. Value-free information that presents both natural and artificial methods and the possible risks of sex would make young adults think twice about sex, how, when and with whom they do it.

This is why we have to consider educating the youth about sex early. It is almost impossible to stop our young from experimenting, but by arming them with information about sex, pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), they become empowered to make intelligent decisions.

I know many teenagers, a number of them even younger than me, who are already parents. They married early, already raising children while they themselves are still growing up. Forced into marriage, they got separated after a couple of years, robbed of their youth.

The larger picture is, of course, our already ballooning population. If the trend continues, there will be 160 million Filipinos 30 years from now. There is a direct relation between poverty and population growth. To achieve sustainable development, we have to address the population issue. Integrating sex education into the curriculum early is a step in that direction.

—KRING ZAMORA,
kring02@yahoo.com

Worse than what the picture shows?

THIS is in reaction to the editorial titled "Who's next?" (PDI, 3/15/05)

The number of peasants, church workers, national minorities, human rights workers and activists killed during the period January-March 15 this year have reached 38. Sixteen of these were victims of massacre. Six are believed to have been "made to disappear." Most of them come from Central Luzon, Southern Tagalog and Mindanao.

During the same period, military operations, disguised as "war against terrorism," have forcibly displaced 23,166 individuals in various areas of the country.

Curiously, Malacañang is silent on these human rights violations by government security forces. Worse, the commander in chief has promoted officers who are publicly known as notorious human rights violators.

Statistics show that there is a state policy of political repression despite the absence of a formal declaration of martial law. We fear that the proposed "anti-terrorist measures" now pending in Congress, will further "legalize" the killing of government critics.

—JIGS CLAMOR,
deputy secretary general,
Karapatan,
krptn@philonline.com

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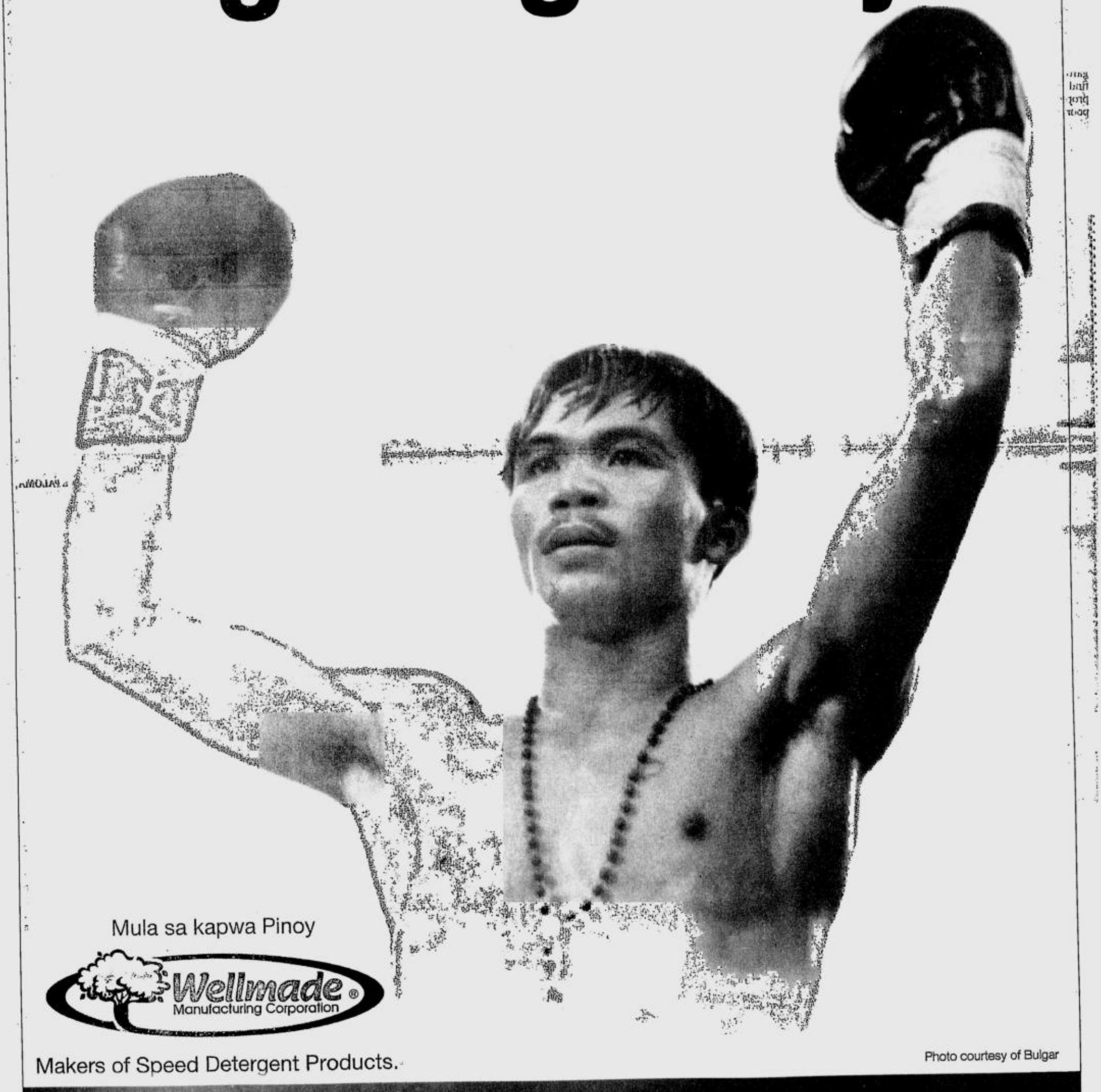

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Changes sought in ancestral land law

BAGUIO CITY—The House of Representatives is investigating fake ancestral land titles that were allegedly distributed here in 2001, in anticipation of measures that will amend the 1997 Indigenous Peoples Rights Act.

But Ifugao Rep. Solomon Chungalao, chair of the House committee on national cultural communities, assured indigenous rights advocates that changes on the Ipra were not meant to favor the mining industry, which challenged the law before the Supreme Court in 1998.

Groups lobbying for Ipra's withdrawal "will [try] to undermine it instead through other legislation," Chungalao said.

He said several House measures that have been sponsored by other legislators would render Ipra inutile, unless amendments to strengthen Certificates of Ancestral Land Titles (CALTs) as well as Certificates of Ancestral Domain Titles (CADTs), are made.

Hold in court

These special land titles must "hold out in any court," he said.

An urban poor organization first accused lawyer David Daoas, former chair of the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples, of issuing 600 "midnight" titles before former President Joseph Estrada's ouster in 2001.

Daoas had admitted processing the CADTs, but said none of these documents was issued pending final clearance from government agencies involved in land assessment and titling.

Not a single CALT had been released to indigenous Filipino communities since 2001.

NCIP has also cleared 44 of the 600 CALTs which Daoas' set of commissioners approved days before Estrada's ouster.

President Macapagal-Arroyo has so far released 35 CADTs, which cover wider tracts of lands and which are technically communal in nature, and not individual private lands like CALTs.

The CADTs titled 902,342 hectares of lands to Ibalois, Aetas, Mindanao *lumads* and other cultural groups.

No show

Chungalao scheduled the first committee hearings last week, but Daoas did not participate. The Ifugao lawmaker has scheduled a second hearing here in May.

"My inclination is not on mining, but to understand the loopholes of titling ancestral lands. [A congressman] has filed a parallel House bill reducing the scope and restrictions of the environmental compliance certificate, and it would have diluted Ipra," he said.

The Ipra restricts mining activities from ancestral land territories without the approval of their communities.

Among the rules under scrutiny are guidelines for securing the free, prior and informed consent (FPIC) of indigenous peoples whose lands are planned for mining operations, because it is a new prerequisite to obtaining an ECC, Chungalao said.

He said several Mindanao lawmakers have also sponsored measures seeking to protect ancestral lands by prohibiting their commercial transfer to tribal outsiders.

The status of these titles has become a government imperative because of a Supreme Court ruling upholding the Philippine Mining Act of 1995.

Eduardo Austria, Cordillera mining supervisor of the Mines and Geosciences Bureau, said government has sent a fact-finding team to Apayao, when both Apayao Rep. Elias Bulut Jr. and Apayao Gov. Elias Bulut Sr. asked the MGB to recommend their province to mining investors.

But the MGB has also respected the wishes of Mt. Province to ban mining, Austria said.

A Mt. Province ordinance prohibiting mining is the reason why MGB has closed the province to investors, he said. *Vincent Cabreza, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

200 leaders of groups hold summit to 'talk' of planning families

ANGELES CITY—Family planning advocates here on Tuesday held a summit to discuss family planning and the integrated reproductive health and population reduction bill (House Bill 3773) amid the Catholic Church's campaign against the proposed law.

Summit organizers said the commitment was to "talk about family planning in every family."

The event of the Solidarity of Advocates for Family Enlightenment on Family Planning (SAFE-FP) gathered more than 200 representatives from at least 18 people's organizations, non-government institutions, government agencies and 33 barangay councils in this city. Pastors from the Iglesia ni Cristo and Jesus is Lord Movement also came.

Some 50 health workers also joined the summit organized by the Ing Makababaying Aksyon Foundation and supported by United States Agency for International Development (USAID).

"It pains me to be called a disciple of Satan," said Dr. Ric Gonzalez, medical advisor of the Academy for Educational Development, which handles the USAID-funded Social Acceptance Project, in reaction to the Catholic Church's recent labeling of groups supporting HB 3773.

"I respect the integrity of the womb and the life in it," he said during the summit.

Gonzalez, Jose Fabella Memorial Hospital director from 1987 to 2002, said he had seen the risks of frequent pregnancy to women and this convinced him about the need to adopt spacing or limiting methods.

He said the hospital recorded an average of 120 babies delivered daily.

He said his commitment was to "help women manage their fertility based on informed choice."

His group, however, has not lobbied in Congress for the passage of HB 3773. He said AED is USAID-funded and his group's lobbying might be misconstrued as "unnecessarily influencing policy."

Instead, Gonzalez urged SAFE-FP members and health workers to "seize the opportunity to talk about family planning." This, he said, did not succeed well in the last 30 years since it was introduced because of incorrect information.

Some health workers, he said, do not integrate family planning in their routine work. Worse, some spread wrong information.

Gonzalez said "couples, the whole family, the whole community" should talk about family planning openly.

The AED supports natural and spacing methods so long as these are sustained, he said.

"Those (in the Church) are saying that any artificial method is an abortion method. Based on evidence, it is not. There are side effects but these can be corrected," he said.

The AED said the family planning program "has not made significant gains" in increasing the use of modern family planning methods like pills, IUD (intrauterine device), condoms, injectables, natural family planning and male and female sterilization. *Tonette Orejas, PDI Central Luzon Desk*

ROGER MARGALLO

SPICE MONUMENT
A jeep appears to be loaded with an overgrown chili on its roof as it passes through a monument for the favorite spice of the Bicol region at Malabog Village in Daraga, Albay.

2 ex-tourism chiefs join fight to keep water tower

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—Sen. Richard Gordon and Gemma Cruz-Araneta, both former tourism secretaries, have joined efforts to stop the demolition of an 83-year-old water tank in this Pampanga capital city.

The 30.48-meter concrete water tank is one of the few American colonial structures surviving here. The water tower stopped supplying 100,000 gallons of water in the city 10 years ago.

"We cannot look with confidence at the future if we cannot look back at our precious past," Gordon said.

He called the INQUIRER to say he would exert all efforts to get the tower preserved.

The City of San Fernando Water District and the Barangay Dolores Council want it demolished.

They said it posed risk to students of the San Fernando Elementary School because it is leaning southwest to the school's direction.

The village council also wants to use part of the 2,000-square meter property of the water district for public use. It wants to build a day care center, barangay hall and multipurpose building there.

Araneta, chair of Heritage Conservation Society, appeared in Monday's city council hearing to air her group's appeal to save the tower.

Reynaldo Inovero, chief of the National Historical Institute's historical preservation division, and Dave Jimenez, the local counterpart of Araneta, made the same appeal.

Araneta urged more time for studies to determine the tower's safety and engineering measures to stop its titling.

There are technologies for these, she said.

They questioned the rush of the village council in the demolition plan. The water district agreed to defer the demolition.

Fernando Santos, city tourism chief, said the tower occupies only less than 100 square meters in the property.

"The little space that it occupies would not greatly affect the need for spaces for public use. As for public safety, that is also in our mind. All these could be considered and should never be pitted against each other," Santos said.

Conservation groups asked Councilor Bernie Castro, chair of the council's tourism, arts and culture committee, to wait for the results of a study that would be conducted by the National Commission for Culture and the Arts in April.

"Let's wait for scientific evaluation before we reduce the tower into rubble and let go of this symbol of our heritage," Santos said. *Tonette Orejas, PDI Central Luzon Desk*

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Radioman faces arrest over defamation suit

MATI, Davao Oriental—A radio commentator here was ordered arrested as a result of a defamation suit filed by an aide of Gov. Maria Elena Palma Gil.

Judge Isabelo Rabe, of the Mati municipal trial court, on Monday ordered the police to immediately arrest Frank Gupit of the Radyo Natin, an affiliate station of the Manila Broadcasting Corp.

As of late afternoon yesterday, police failed to serve the warrant, which Gupit said he was "earnestly" waiting for.

The broadcaster stayed at the radio station for the whole day yesterday.

Neilwin Joseph Bravo filed a defamation suit against Gupit because the commentator allegedly accused him of bribing INQUIRER columnist Ramon Tulfo.

Tulfo, a native of Manay town, earlier wrote that Palma Gil and her son, Jaypot were behind illegal logging in the province.

In his complaint, Bravo said Gupit allegedly uttered the following statement during an edition of his program Exposé: "The only problem is if the half-a-million peso bribe money intended for INQUIRER columnist Ramon Tulfo may just end up in the pockets of Bravo."

Bravo said such "defamatory" statement was "aired with the object of destroying, discrediting and humiliating me before the bar of public opinion."

Aside from Gupit, Bravo also sued Radyo Natin manager Raul Antopuesto, who co-hosts the program.

However, no warrant was issued for Antopuesto's arrest.

Gupit said he will not post the P20,000 bail set by the judge for his temporary liberty.

"I will stay in jail. But I will continue hosting my radio program from my detention cell. And we will not stop exposing the anomalies in the provincial government. We will see what will be the reaction of the people of Davao Oriental. Gov. Palma Gil is persecuting local journalists critical of her," Gupit said.

Yesterday, print and broadcast journalists in the province started wearing black T-shirts to sympathize with Gupit.

They also initiated a campaign dubbed "Piso Para Kang Gupit," a fund-raising drive aimed at helping the broadcaster raise money for the required bail.

Aside from the libel suit filed by Bravo, Gupit and Antopuesto also face two libel suits filed by Board Member Maria Consuelo Bambi Palma Gil, the governor's daughter.

In the first suit, board member Palma Gil said the two broadcasters labeled her as "so young and yet so corrupt."

In her new complaint against Gupit and Antopuesto, she said the two broadcasters called her "*tanga*" (dumb), "*walay saktong panghuna huna*" (mentally unstable), and "*kawatan*" (thief). *Ferdinand Zuasola, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

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INQUIRER Northern Luzon

Editor Jun Bandayrel
Bureau Chief Rolando B. Fernandez

Neglected shrine symbolizes peace

By Donna Demetillo
Baguio City

FOR ABOUT 20 years, the marble dove has stood there, perched atop Baguio City's highest cliff and rock formations in Campo Sioco overlooking the Sto. Rosario Valley. But no one knows why the monument is there.

To Sr. Ann Braudis and the Maryknoll nuns, the dove symbolizes their mission of peace, love and of nurturing the earth. With this in mind, the nuns and several residents joined hands to restore the damaged and vandalized monument and its surroundings to its former glory as a pilgrimage site.

The dove, carved out of marble and weighing 350 kilograms, was painstakingly carried by 14 men through narrow, uneven trails leading to the top of the hill in the mid-1980s.

"People in the village did not know what it was for," said Braudis.

Known as the "Dambana ng Dios Espiritu Santo" (Temple of the Holy Spirit), the monument was erected out of a "message from heaven," said Frank Morco, a logger-turned-spiritual seeker, who commissioned its creation.

THIS little-known shrine atop a rock formation in Campo Sioco, Baguio City, has become an alternative spiritual destination in the country's summer capital. EV ESPIRITU

Message

Morco, who visits the temple yearly in between his trips abroad, said the message was relayed to him through a spiritual medium that he identified as Reina Casiano sometime in the 1980s.

"Since 1986, I was looking for a place for the Dambana ng Dios. I looked everywhere until I found this place where I felt the energy could flow down to the rest of the nation and the rest of the globe," he said.

He said it took them months to haul water, gravel and other construction materials to the hilltop to build the temple.

The marble dove's base is a triangle atop three connecting heart-shaped concrete pillars. The pillars rest on a cement base. Morco said the hearts symbolized love and the Holy Trinity or the Holy Family, while the triangular pedestal stood for unity, sharing and justice.

Mystified

From the Maryknoll Ecological Sanctuary grounds, also in Campo Sioco, Braudis would see the three hearts amid the verdant pine trees surrounding the area, and would be mystified by that sight.

Like Morco, Dr. Consolacion Alaras, head of the pilgrimage committee of the National Commission for Culture and the Arts, received the message asking her to build the dove monument and shrine. Morco and Alaras have known each other since the 1980s.

In the course of Braudis' masteral studies on ancient values at the University of the Philippines in Diliman, Quezon City, she met Alaras, who sat in a panel that validated her thesis.

Alaras is also a faculty member of the UP's Department of English and Comparative Literature and has done extensive research on Philippine sacred ancestral and heroic legacies.

Alaras, who saw that Braudis' study embraced the elements of the Dambana ng Bayan ("to capture the unifying vision of ancient ancestors and heroes to bring forth a nation of spiritual values"), told the nun the purpose of the dove in Baguio.

It is a symbol of peace, justice, freedom, honor, dignity and unity—the same aspirations of the members of the secret society Katipunan, in the midst of the country's political unrest at that time, she said.

After that interaction, Braudis and the Maryknoll nuns have since involved the surrounding barangays in the mission of establishing the neglected shrine as a spiritual destination.

Today, only the dove's right wing is intact. "That can symbolize the colonized periods, when culture and the flow of ancient values were interrupted," Braudis said.

Braudis and Alaras are working to have the site, a range of ancient limestone, proclaimed a protected area.

"The rocks alone, pillars and arches take us farther to the origins of the land, before there were any people and when everything was just ocean. And when the ocean receded, it left these rock formations behind as markers of land formations and landscapes, and tell a story of the beauty of the mountains," Braudis said.

Hafalla records altering landscape of Mt. Province

OB-OBFU," an exhibition of photographs by Tommy Hafalla, opens at the Bontoc Museum in Bontoc, Mt. Province, on April 4, as one of the activities of the Mt. Province Day celebrations.

Baguio-born Hafalla will exhibit varigram-toned images taken in different villages of Mt. Province between 1985 and 2004. His 16th solo exhibition will run until May 21.

Hafalla's mastery of the art of black and white photography and his darkroom techniques give the visual artist a style that is uniquely his own.

One of the few remaining old-school photographers who has not yielded to the technological convenience of digital photography, he still shoots with a 4 x 5 large format Sinar and a 35mm SLR Nikon F2, formulates his own photographic chemicals, and processes his film, prints and tones in his own darkroom.

Since the 1970s, Hafalla has been hiking many rough trails and exploring places around Baguio and in Benguet, Mt. Province, Kalinga and Ifugao.

Cordillera images

Over three decades, he has accumulated a vast range of works that include photographs of the Cordillera's natural environment and of diverse cultural traditions associated to the agricultural cycle and to the rituals of healing, birth, death and marriage.

Without realizing it, he has made it a personal mission to keep a visual record of the changing physical landscape and of the people's enduring traditions.

Hafalla's long visits to the remote areas have earned him the trust of the people, allowing him to transcend the vulnerability of reducing photographic subjects into cultural curiosities.

People's spirit

Beyond ethnographic documentation, his photographs convey nuances of life, work and ritual in different parts of the region, allowing viewers to discern the spirit and vitality of a people within specific cultural contexts.

Hafalla's work earned him a Thirteen Artists Award from the Cultural Center of the Philippines in 1992. He was a Philippine representative to the Asean symposium in painting and photography in 1988 and 1991.

Complementing the photographic exhibition are high-fired stoneware pottery produced in Sagada, Mt. Province by Lope Bosaing and Siegrid Anne Bangyay. Both potters trained at the Sagada Ceramics Center in Danunoy, Sagada. *Erlyn Alcantara, contributor*

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3 in Cavite media man's murder hunted

CAMP VICENTE LIM, Laguna—Police investigating the murder of a community journalist in Naic, Cavite on Monday said they were hunting down three persons, including the victim's common-law wife, who might have information on the killing.

Supt. Mario Sanga, chief of the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group (CIDG) in Calabarzon, said police's initial investigation revealed that a few hours before victim Arnulfo Villanueva was found dead, he was seen talking to a certain Allan Tayson and Mencio Arhente.

Villanueva's body, he said, was recovered near the house owned by Arhente's brother in Barangay Timalan.

Sanga said they were likewise looking for the victim's live-in partner, identified only as a certain Anna, who he said was with Villanueva before he was murdered on Feb. 28.

"*Malapit na naming ma*-solve *ang kaso* (We're getting close to solving the case). If only we can get the testimony of Anna, our case against Tayson and Arhente would be stronger. Our investigation showed that he was with the victim minutes before Villanueva was shot dead," Sanga told the INQUIRER in his office.

Other motives

He said his office was standing by its earlier conclusion that Villanueva's killing "is more likely not job related."

He said the testimony of Villanueva's son, Jerome, supported the circumstantial evidence recovered from the crime scene.

In his sworn statement before the CIDG, Jerome said his father had a quarrel with the suspects last January over a transaction involving Villanueva's unlicensed gun and Tayson's refrigerator.

"[Jerome] said Tayson got angry with his father after finding out that he (Villanueva) handed him an unserviceable 'paltik' in exchange for his (Tayson) refrigerator," Sanga said in an earlier interview.

Jerome, 19, likewise said the vest and sandals seen beside his father's body belonged to Tayson.

Sanga said it was possible that the victim went to the suspects' house in Barangay Timalan, after which they had an argument which led to the shooting.

Column

But, he said, they are still not ruling out the possibility that Villanueva's work as a columnist at the Asian Star Express Balita might have something to do with the killing.

The victim was critical of the illegal operation of a dump in Naic town and a land-grabbing case and illegal quarrying operations in Tanza town, he said.

Villanueva was the 64th murdered journalist since the fall of the late strongman Ferdinand Marcos in 1986.

Sanga, however, admitted that police have yet to file any case against the three, as some of the pieces of evidence suspiciously disappeared.

He also revealed that the inability of the Naic police to secure important evidence at the crime scene was causing the delay of their investigation.

Among the missing pieces of evidence was a black vest that suspect Tayson supposedly owned.

Jerome told police investigators that the vest went missing after Mencio allegedly "cleaned up" the crime scene before the police arrived. *Marlon Ramos, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

ANGELS ready to take flight. MADONNA VIROLA

Kites looking like angels take flight in Mindoro

NAUJAN, Oriental Mindoro—Kites resembling angels won the figure category of the kite-flying festival here on Easter Sunday.

To the delight of Mindoreños, 11 kites that look like angels flew after they were released into the air by kite pilot Joemar Mirasol, 24, assisted by 11 men during the 17th Kite Flying Festival at the sports complex here.

Glider and stunt kite designs were disqualified because a lot of children were watching.

"It did not fly last year, there was only one angel. Joining the kite-flying contest is a risk," said Mirasol. The angel kites were tested for two days.

"We improve every year. We did the 11 angel-kites for one month. We wanted to make 'Kristala' (inspired by a top-rating soap opera) but we were short of time. Our barangay (Sta. Cruz), through captain Teresa Atienza, shouldered the expenses, more than a thousand pesos," said Mirasol, whose brother Luisito, a tricycle driver, made the angel-kites with friend Romeo.

Their village won first in both contest categories.

Watchers observed that the more the designs are intricate and heavier, the more challenging it was to fly the kites.

Kites that were simple and plain in designs were able to fly high.

Watchers told the INQUIRER that last year, the dragon kite won.

"The flying cell phone 3315 is one of the creative expressions of the contestants. It's a sign of the time. The watch kite is about technology . . . others are inherently creative," said visual artist Bobby Nuestro, one of the judges and a Mindoreño who has staged international exhibits.

"The Pinoy is really good in designs. We only lose in the business aspect, especially to China," Nuestro added.

A kite should be up in two minutes and should stay in the air for five minutes.

The criteria were creativity, craftsmanship, flying ability, visual impact while airborne, and pilot maneuvering ability. Pilots were in white T-shirts.

Romeo Belano, 45, flat category champion and a river fisher, and fellow kite flyers gave the following tips on kite flying: The kite's position should be right, based on the wind direction, and the string should always be held tight and straight. *Madonna Virola, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

A BUTTERFLY preparing to spread its wings. MADONNA VIROLA

Aurora, Isabela villagers plead for logging's return

CABANATUAN CITY—Residents dependent on wood-based industries in Aurora and Isabela are appealing to President Macapagal-Arroyo to lift the order suspending logging operations in their areas to save their families from hunger.

Employees of furniture shops displaced by the logging suspension in Dilasag and Casiguran towns in Aurora and in Dinapigue, Isabela, said they have no other means of livelihood to support their families.

Conchita Discarga, a Dumagat chieftain in Casiguran, said tribal members, who earn through selling forests products that they gather to wood-based industries, found themselves suddenly without work when the logging suspension was enforced nationwide last year.

The President imposed the suspension shortly after a series of typhoons and its resulting flash floods wiped out communities in Luzon.

But Ms Arroyo later lifted the log ban in Caraga and Southern Mindanao following appeals from wood producers and workers there.

Former Casiguran mayors Fidel Salamera and Jeremias Esteves, in separate statements, said responsible logging activities created job opportunities for many residents in their town.

They said the suspension of logging operations had slowed down commercial activities in the towns.

Reports received by the INQUIRER showed that some licensed logging firms in Aurora and Isabela have dismissed their employees due to the suspension.

Other groups who have permits to gather forest products have been barred by Army soldiers and personnel of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources from transporting the products, reports said.

The displaced employees and workers have started holding prayer and vigil rallies to air their appeal to the President and Environment Secretary Michael Defensor. *Anselmo Roque, PDI Central Luzon Desk*

C. Mindanao farmers feel El Niño heat

By Edwin Fernandez
PDI Mindanao Bureau

COTABATO CITY—Farmers in Central Mindanao are already experiencing the excruciating heat brought by the El Niño phenomenon since last month.

As the weather becomes hotter, agriculture officials in the region are asking local government executives to extend support for cloud-seeding operations.

Cloud-seeding is a technology that dispenses iodized salt from aircraft, from an altitude of about 11,000 feet, to hasten the formation of rain clouds.

The DA-Central Mindanao has an allocation of P1.8 million for the cloud-seeding operation. But officials said the amount is not enough for several sorties of private planes.

It would cost the DA some P30,000 per flying hour of cloud-seeding operations.

"We need the help of our local government units to ensure food sufficiency this year," said officials.

Farmers in North Cotabato have already experienced the effects of the dry spell, according to Cotabato Gov. Emmanuel Piñol.

"Some areas in the province could no longer be planted to crops due to insufficient water supply," he said.

He said the effects of the El Niño phenomenon are now being felt by farmers in the hinterland Barangays of M'lang, Matalam, Tulunan and President Roxas, all major producers of rice and corn.

While DA officials are yet to conduct cloud-seeding operations, Piñol urged farmers to consider shifting to other crops.

Negros state university to hike fees

By Romy G. Amarado
PDI Visayas Bureau

DUMAGUETE CITY—The Negros Oriental State University (Norsu) will impose a 100 percent increase in tuition this coming school year but it will remain to be one of the least expensive among state-run universities.

Dr. Henry Sojor, Norsu president, told the INQUIRER that the increase was needed to enable the year-old university to provide quality education to poor but capable students.

With the adjustment, Norsu's tuition will go up from P1,000 to P2,000 per semester, he said.

With miscellaneous, development and Internet fees, a regular non-graduating Norsu student will pay P3,500 a semester beginning June and P4,000 per semester for senior students.

Still, Sojor maintained that Norsu's rates are still the lowest among state universities and colleges (SUCs) in the country.

By comparison, he said, the Batangas State University will collect about P7,000 in tuition starting June while the Cebu State College of Science and Technology will impose a P3,000 tuition next school year. The Mindanao Polytechnic College in Cagayan de Oro City will charge about P4,000 to P5,000 a semester, he added.

Disgruntled workers occupy water district office

By Joey A. Gabieta
PDI Visayas Bureau

TACLOBAN CITY—Tension gripped the Leyte Metropolitan Water District (LMWD) on Tuesday when about 50 dismissed workers entered the office and paralyzed its business operations.

The members of the Leyte Metropolitan Water District Employees Association (LMWDEA) went inside the building on Mabini Street here at about 4:45 a.m.

They invoked the decision of the Civil Service Commission (CSC) that declared the appointment of Ranulfo Feliciano as LMWD general manager as without any legal basis.

Ricky Palencia, secretary of the LMWDEA, said the ruling meant that Feliciano had no authority to dismiss them from the service in October last year for staging a rally to demand for the release of their benefits.

The four security guards assigned at that time failed to drive them away.

"We were outnumbered. We just pleaded to them not to destroy anything once they are inside the building," said Eulogio Cuyo, a security guard assigned at the main entrance of the LMWD office.

Palencia, however, assured that they had no plans to "touch or destroy" any document or pieces of property inside the building.

But the business operations of the water firm, the biggest in Eastern Visayas, were paralyzed after the LMWD employees decided not to report for work when they heard about the incident.

Affected were the payments of bills, reading of water meter and the billing section.

But union officials said the employees were welcome to report for work, as what they did was not a take over.

"This is not a takeover. We enter the building just to make sure that everything in here is secured and that no important documents or properties could be taken out from the office. We assure the public that we are not out to do anything bad but only to fight for what is legally due to us," said engineer Gonzalo Caidic, LMWDEA president.

He said they would not leave the building unless the CSC and the Commission on Audit conducts an inventory and audit of the number of personnel and assets of the water agency.

The LMWD has more than 25,000 concessionaires, covering the towns of Palo, Tanauan, Pastrana, Sta. Fe, Dagami and this city. It has more than 500 personnel, 108 of them belonging to LMWDEA.

Virginia Flores, chair of the five-member LMWD board of directors, was shocked by the move of the union members.

"It was a brutal and shocking act. They should have at least waited for the court to issue its decision," she told the INQUIRER.

She admitted that she was at a loss as to what action the board would take.

Feliciano could not be reached for his reaction.

FPJ poll protest junked

From page A1

said he would file a motion for reconsideration within 15 days.

"In effect, the Supreme Court is saying that Macapagal-Arroyo can now go on to finish a full six-year term even if there is a cloud of doubt [over her election]," he said in a phone interview. "This ruling is unfair."

Brillantes said he spoke with Roces soon after they heard the news. "I told her not to say anything to the media until we had read and studied the ruling," he said.

Anticipated decision

Poe's followers met last night to plan their next course of action.

Rez Cortez, leader of the National Council of Concerned Volunteers for FPJ, told the INQUIRER that some of its members were "agitated" by the high court's ruling.

"But we also anticipated this outcome," he said, adding that the group received a "tip" that the ruling would be issued before the Holy Week. "[It] is just a confirmation of [the administration's] plans to dismiss the protest."

According to Cortez, Roces is "not after the position" and "only wants the truth."

"But we can see it now—that this administration will never allow the opening of the electoral returns. I don't think they really want to see the truth, or allow the people to know the truth," he said.

Poe, standard-bearer of the opposition, lost to Ms Arroyo by over one million votes.

He and his running mate, Loren Legarda, who lost to now Vice President Noli de Castro, filed their respective election protests on July 23, 2004.

Noble intention

In its ruling, the high court lauded Roces for her efforts to continue her husband's election protest for the purpose of learning who had really won in the May 2004 presidential election.

"We laud her noble intention and her interest to find out the true will of the electorate. However, nobility of intention is not the point of reference in determining whether a person may intervene in an election protest," it said.

It cited Rule 19, Section 1, of the Rules of Court, which says that "the interest which allows a person to intervene in a suit must be in a matter of litigation and of such direct and immediate character that the intervenor will either gain or lose by the effect of the judgment.

"In this protest, Mrs. FPJ will not immediately and directly benefit from the outcome should it be determined that the declared president did not truly get the highest number of votes," the high court said.

Roces had stated in her petition that she was motivated by "paramount public interest" and her desire to "pursue the process" started by her husband.

Finis

Lawyer Ismael Khan, head of the Supreme Court's Public Information Office, said the ruling had in effect written "finis" to the election protest filed by Poe and his wife.

He said that while Roces could still seek reconsideration within 15 days, he was doubtful that the justices could be convinced to change their position.

"With the unanimous decision, *medyo malabo na yan* (that does not seem likely)," he said in an interview.

Khan said Poe's camp should have picked Legarda or the other opposition presidential candidate, Sen. Panfilo Lacson (who placed third), as Poe's substitute in the election protest.

"Lacson and Loren are the real party of interest," he said. "No real party in interest came out within the prescribed period."

Not personal and exclusive

Asked whether Lacson or Legarda could still file another petition to substitute for Poe, Khan said: "It should have been done 30 days after the proclamation [of Ms Arroyo on June 30, 2004]. They should have used that opportunity. At that point, *puwede pa rin yun siguro* [perhaps it could have been done]."

The high court said it allowed substitution and intervention only by a real "party in interest."

It cited its decision on the Vda. De Mesa v. Mencias case where it ruled "that while the right to a public office is personal and exclusive to the public officer, an election protest is not purely personal and exclusive to the protestant or to the protestee, such that the death of either would oust the court of all authority to continue the protest proceedings."

The high court also cited Rule 14 of the PET Rules, which provides that "[o]nly the registered candidate of the President or Vice President... who received the second and third highest number of votes may contest the election of the President or Vice President... by filing a verified petition with the clerk of the [PET] within 30 days after the proclamation of the winner."

But Brillantes said the ruling was based on "technicalities."

"[The justices] never said that Susan was not the proper party to file the protest. Now they are saying in the ruling that she is not the proper party. Then who is the proper party?" he said.

Brillantes also noted that the high court said the "proper party" had failed to file the protest within the prescribed period. "Can the proper party now file the protest within the next 30 days of the decision?" he said.

Haste

House Minority Leader Francis Escudero lamented the supposed haste with which the justices dismissed Poe's protest and his widow's petition.

"We are only interested in the truth, considering the fact that there is doubt as to who really won in the presidential election. But this was not given much importance," he said.

Escudero said the justices "should have gone out of their way to explain the reasons and arguments that led to their decision."

He said this was important because many still doubted the results of the presidential election. ***With a report from Philip C. Tubeza***

Police colonel, politician eyed in Esperat murder

From page A1

Chief Supt. Antonio Billiones, Central Mindanao police director, said the names of a politician and businessman-contractor had also cropped up in their investigation.

But Billiones refused to identify any of the four people.

"The names of a police colonel and his son in General Santos have emerged as possibly involved in what happened, so we are going to investigate them," Billones told reporters.

Politician, businessman

"The names of a politician and a contractor-businessman have also cropped up because they were subjects of columns by Marlene."

Esperat, 45, was killed by one bullet fired by a lone gunman who even greeted her before shooting her in front of her horrified children in Tacurong City on Maundy Thursday.

In an interview with reporters, Esperat's husband, George, mentioned General Santos police chief Senior Supt. Willie Dangane, a former Sultan Kudarat congressman and a mayor as "mortal enemies" of his wife.

Dangane dismissed the insinuations against him.

"I'm not bothered by the statement of a certain George Esperat implicating my name in the killing of his wife. The late Marlene Esperat and I were not enemies. Maybe it is her husband who should be investigated," Dangane said at a press conference.

He said he would welcome an investigation so the truth would come out.

Case still pending

The late Esperat, columnist of a weekly community paper, The Midland Review, filed a case of obstruction of justice against Dangane when he was the Tacurong City police chief.

The case remains pending with the office of the Ombudsman-Mindanao.

Luis Salazar, legal counsel of Dangane, said the case filed by Esperat was weak and could be "dismissed even without me filing an answer.

Salazar told reporters that his client was not a direct respondent in the case.

GMA to pay respects

President Macapagal-Arroyo was expected to pay a visit to Esperat's wake on Wednesday after launching a flagship project of the Department of Agriculture in the Buliok complex in Pikit, North Cotabato.

Esperat used to work with the DA in Central Mindanao, during which she filed corruption charges against DA officials before the Ombudsman. She left the department in early 2004.

Days before she was gunned down, Esperat reported to the Tacurong police that threats to her life were becoming more frequent, prompting the local police to provide her with security escorts.

She let her escorts go on vacation, however, since it was Holy Week.

"We are looking at all angles," Billiones said, adding that the attack on Esperat was "work-related."

Months before her death, Esperat had denounced alleged massive corruption in the Office of the Ombudsman, saying it was the reason graft cases against influential people were not moving.

Esperat's letter

In a letter to Ombudsman Simeon Marcelo late last year, Esperat also lamented how whistle-blowing had become a thankless, taxing and high-risk endeavor.

"I have all the necessary documents to engender a well-founded belief that most, if not all, bureaus and offices of deputies of the Ombudsman have fixers of cases within," Esperat said.

Courage of Pinay journalists cited

By Volt Contreras

A US diplomat expressed unease yesterday over the murder of yet another Filipino journalist, saying a "functioning society" deserved an assurance justice would prevail.

"Many of the killings happened to people ... shortly after or as a consequence of writing a story or broadcasting some kind of abuses or anomalies in their community," said US Embassy press attache Karen Kelley.

"For me as an outsider not knowing the deeper social realities, [this is] what I find unsettling," Kelley said at the Bulong Pulungan media forum.

"Even more disturbing ... [is that] law enforcers seem to have a difficult time resolving the cases."

Kelley said she didn't want to presume to know the issues involved "but once a crime is committed ... we need as members of a functioning society to have an assurance that, if something horrific happens to us, justice will be given."

Kelley spoke following the showing of an Emmy Award-winning 2001 documentary, "She Says: Women in the News."

It depicts American female journalists in their struggle for equality and recognition—and freedom from sexual harassment—in mainly macho newsrooms, and for the mainstreaming of the "women's perspective" in reportage.

Kelley said she was struck by how different the concerns of female US journalists and their Filipino counterparts were.

"In the context of the Philippines, it's not an equal pay-equal work issue. It's having the courage to speak out versus the enormous pressure that can be put on you in a martial law environment," she said.

Bishops press gov't to resolve Hacienda Luisita killings

From page A1

ment investigation, especially since the military is suspected to be the author of these assassinations," CBCP president Fernando Capalla of the Archdiocese of Davao said in the three-page letter to be read during Masses in dioceses nationwide this week.

Capalla, who leads a team of bishops mediating the dispute, said the Church initiative should be "accompanied by our government's audacious policy decisions to create a climate of freedom that encourages frank dialogue between management and strikers.

"Such a precondition for a just settlement is absent when the government is seen as indifferent in investigating the assassination of key supporters of the strikers," Capalla said.

"Let us learn from our history and not repeat its mistakes," he said, citing the late President Manuel Roxas' "iron fist" policy that served to fuel the armed peasant struggle in Central Luzon in the 1950s.

The letter was a follow-up to the strongly worded pastoral statement issued on Monday by Archbishop Paciano Aniceto of the Ecclesiastical Province of San Fernando.

Stalled talks

The negotiations being brokered by the CBCP have "stalled" following the successive killings this month of Tarlac City Councilor Adelardo Ladera, Fr. William Tadena of the Philippine Independent Church, and Anakpawis coordinator Victor Concepcion—all known supporters of the Luisita workers.

Human rights groups have accused the military of masterminding the killings, allegedly because of the victims' affiliation with Left-leaning groups.

But Lt. Gen. Romeo Dominguez, chief of the military's Northern Luzon Command, had put the blame on the New People's Army, claiming that the victims were killed because they had "outgrown their usefulness" to the communist movement.

said, referring to the CBCP approach in brokering the talks. "It unfolds a new horizon of peace and justice, a new civilization of life and love. It rejects violence from whatever source."

The CBCP had earlier disclaimed "technical expertise," saying it intended only to "adopt a realistic process which would lead to sustained dialogue" between the contending camps at the vast sugar estate owned by the Aquino-Cojuangco clan.

So far, Capalla said, the Church mediation had earned positive feedback: "The workers and farmers have repeatedly expressed their joy in our presence at these negotiations, which often ended late at night. The management felt that our support of a step-by-step process which narrowed down the areas of disagreement was an acceptable approach."

Signs of hope

Capalla said he and his team—which includes Aniceto and Tarlac Bishop Florentino Cinense—had also been conducting "back-door" meetings with both parties.

Negotiating agrarian conflicts is not new to the CBCP.

In 1968, it organized the National Rural Congress, which "saw the roots of much of our social evils in the present pattern of land ownership in the country," Capalla said.

The setup "condemns farmer-tenants to a miserable condition of economic dependence and strips them of freedom and dignity," he said.

At least 10 people have been killed in connection with the conflict. Seven workers died and 36 others were wounded during the police dispersal of striking workers on Nov. 16, 2004.

But according to Capalla, there was hope at each meeting that started with prayers and that showed the two parties' willingness to talk.

"All these are signs that our prayer to the Crucified Christ for a peaceful and just solution to the Hacienda Luisita problem is being heard," he said, adding:

"It is time to forsake our resentment and selfishness toward one another. Let us walk hand in hand as brothers and sisters under a sky lit by a new dawn of national unity and reconciliation."

Party-list lawmaker announces fast

REP. RAFAEL Mariano of the militant party-list group Anakpawis will go on a hunger strike starting today to call for an immediate stop to the killing of leftist activists.

Mariano yesterday said in a statement that in the first quarter of the year alone, 18 activists belonging to Anakpawis, other party-list groups Bayan Muna and Gabriela and allied organizations had been killed and six had disappeared.

"The ... systematic and coordinated killings and abductions show that there is a top-level order to 'death squads' across the country to annihilate leaders of progressive parties and militant organizations," he said, adding:

"The main objective of the brutal murders is to destroy the political infrastructure of the militant people's movement."

Mariano's "Hunger Strike for Justice and Peace" will start at 10 a.m. today at the main gate of the House of Representatives in Quezon City. It will coincide with the start of the special session called by President Macapagal-Arroyo.

Rep. Crispin Beltran, also of Anakpawis and a former labor leader, is expected to join Mariano in the hunger strike. Also expected to take part are leaders of the Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas, Pamalakaya and National Federation of Peasant Women-Amihan. ***Philip C. Tubeza in Manila; Delfin T. Mallari Jr. and Marlon Ramos, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau***

Anakpawis Rep. Rafael Mariano said he would embark on a hunger strike today to protest the killing of Concepcion and 17 other militant activists in various parts of the country. *(See sidebar.)*

Authored by Christ

With the unsolved murders, Capalla said Luisita had become a "social theater" with "a script whose core plot is violence."

"The script which the Church uses is authored by Christ," he

Surprise! US diplomat subjected to body search

From page A1

asked such questions as whether she thought her husband, former President Joseph Estrada, would be convicted of plunder.

Various US entities, as well as US Ambassador Francis Ricciardone, offered their apologies and regrets over the incident.

Part of security

A source at the Manila International Airport Authority (Miaa) who was at the presidential lounge said the body check on Hill was a way for Filipinos to get even for the American immigration officials' crude treatment of Ejercito.

However, Senate President Franklin Drilon did not think the incident had anything to do with what happened to Ejercito.

"That's just part of the airport's security measures. I don't think it had something to do with what happened to Senator Loi," he said.

Yesterday, at least three security personnel approached Hill for a body check when he arrived at the Naia presidential lounge for a brief press conference before leaving for Thailand on board a Philippine Airlines flight.

Instead of making a big fuss, Hill, the top US state department representative in Asia, was obliging and quipped: "The TSA (US Transportation Security Administration) will be very happy."

Even Hill's special assistant, James Wayman, and US Embassy counsel for political affairs, Scott Douglas Bellard, allowed themselves to be searched by airport security.

No special treatment

"Well, I just think that proves that there's no special treatment given," Ruth Nikola Urry, deputy press attaché of the US state department, later told reporters when asked for comment.

Hill again underwent a final security check before boarding his flight.

Currently the US ambassador to Seoul, South Korea, Hill will officially assume his duties in Washington next month. He replaces James A. Kelly who resigned from the post in January this year.

Hill, who met with President Macapagal-Arroyo and Foreign Secretary Alberto Romulo, reiterated America's support for her government.

Listen and learn

"It's really been a great pleasure to come here and to see the strength of this relationship, the strength of this alliance. I was very pleased to have this opportunity to meet with the political leadership here," Hill said at the press conference.

Hill said terrorism and the US travel advisories recently issued by Washington were among the issues he discussed with Ms Arroyo. When asked by reporters to give details, he declined to elaborate.

"We were able discuss these issues. I want to emphasize the fact that I was really here on a listen and learn mission. So for me, it was an opportunity to hear from the Filipino government what its problems are, how they see the problems, and how they see the challenges that they face in light of these recent travel advisories," he said.

Hill declined to comment on reports that the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) would be included in the US list of foreign terrorists.

A prominent figure in the talks on the North Korean nuclear issue, Hill stressed the commitment of the United States to the six-party process.

"We feel this is the best way to address the problem posed by the nuclear problem in North Korea. We are prepared to have a very serious and very dedicated negotiation in ridding the Korean peninsula of these weapons. The trouble is we can't be negotiating with an empty chair so we have to encourage—all of us have to encourage—getting the North Korean staff to the table," Hill said. ***With a report from TJ Burgonio***

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Massive quake triggers fears of another tsunami

From page A1

receive reports of Filipinos being killed or injured in the quake. There are an estimated 4,000 Filipinos in Indonesia, most of them in Jakarta and others in Sumatra and the resort island of Bali.

"It's still a rough estimate—the number of the victims of dead may be between 1,000 and 2,000," Vice President Jusuf Kalla said.

He said the estimate was based on the number of buildings damaged when the quake hit about an hour before midnight Monday.

Hours later, Information Minister Sofyan Djalil said initial reports indicated that 100 to 200 had perished. Local officials and the Health Ministry in Jakarta reported about 300 dead.

Indonesia's disaster center said around 1,000 people were killed in the Monday quake—one of the eight biggest in the world since 1900.

Holidaymakers flee

President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono postponed a planned visit Wednesday to Australia and said he would fly to Nias to assess damage.

Elsewhere across the Indian Ocean, beach-front roads in major resort areas—where tourist numbers are still well down on last year—were clogged with traffic as residents and holidaymakers jumped in any available transport to evacuate to higher ground.

On the tsunami-devastated Thai island of Koh Phi Phi, made famous by the cult Leonardo di-Caprio backpacker movie "The Beach," bars emptied as word of a major earthquake spread by phone and word of mouth.

Experts predicted Sumatra earthquake

ELEVEN days ago, a team of earthquake experts published a scientific paper precisely describing how the titanic tsunami-generating earthquake off Sumatra on Dec. 26 greatly raised risks of a fresh offshore earthquake.

The earthquake they described was almost exactly like the one that struck Indonesia on Monday.

The paper's authors and other experts had calculated how the December shock increased stress on the adjacent section of the Sunda Trench, a seam in Earth's crust where one plate dives beneath another.

The increased pressure greatly increased the chance that the seam would fail, they said.

The new earthquake was generated when the plates suddenly moved, releasing pent-up energy.

Yet for hour after hour on Monday, no scientist could say with any certainty whether the new quake, on a fault known to trigger killer waves in the past, had in fact spawned destructive tsunamis.

A tsunami is generated when the ocean floor moves up or down during the quake.

Three months after the December tsunamis exacted a huge death toll, and three weeks after tsunami experts in Paris to design an Indian Ocean alert system, scientists expressed frustration Monday with the vast gaps that must be plugged.

Earlier, Japan said it was ready to give tsunami warning data to six countries if an earthquake measuring magnitude 6.5 or greater occurred in a northwestern part of the Pacific Ocean near Japan and those countries.

The six are Russia, South Korea, China, the Philippines, Indonesia and Papua New Guinea.

"This will provide a reference for strengthening measures against disasters," said an official at Japan's Metropolitan Agency.

Tsunami is a Japanese word meaning "harbor wave." *New York Times, Reuters*

Early reports suggested the town of Gunungsitoli on Nias, off Sumatra's western coast, was worst hit.

An overflight of the town at low altitude revealed many damaged buildings, but showed the destruction was less widespread than initially reported.

"The devastation is obvious as soon as you land. Many of the houses here have collapsed, but it's still too early for us to get a sense of the full scale of this," said Alessandra Boas, member of a team from aid group Oxfam sent to Nias by helicopter.

Thousands of the town's residents fled to the island's hills and remained there Tuesday morning.

Gov't officials run to hills

"It's difficult to get information—all the government officials have run to the hills because they are afraid of a tsunami," presidential envoy T.B. Silalahi said.

The United States, Japan and Australia said they were ready to send troops to the stricken island to help with the cleanup if Jakarta asked.

In Banda Aceh, capital of Indonesia's Aceh province, which was hardest-hit by the December tsunami, thousands poured into the streets, most getting onto motorcycles or into vehicles.

'Waves coming again!'

"We went down to the street and people began to panic. Some people screamed 'Water! Water! The water is coming again'," said Yudisia Arafah, a government worker in Aceh.

"It was horrible, the only thing on my mind was how to get out of the house immediately and save my 3-and-a-half-month baby girl," said 27-year-old Marlina.

In Sri Lanka, warning sirens blared along the island nation's east coast and President Chandrika Kumaratunga urged people to evacuate overnight, before the government withdrew its tsunami warning.

December horror relieved

"It was like reliving the same horror of three months ago," said Fatheena Faleel, who fled her home with her three children.

On Tuesday morning, Buddhist monks and Hindu priests held prayers in temples throughout the tropical island nation to give thanks it was spared from another tsunami.

On Nias island, a police officer told an Indonesian broadcaster that rescuers were trying to pull people out of the rubble and struggling with a lack of electricity.

A MALAYSIAN family sleeps outside their flat in Kuala Lumpur following the 8.7 magnitude earthquake in Indonesia, which was also felt in Malaysia. REUTERS

Many people were panicking because of aftershocks, he said.

Surfing paradise

Nias, 1,400 km northwest of Jakarta and with a population of around 700,000, is regarded as a surfing paradise for a fabled right-hand break—a regular wave that courses at an angle from left to right.

It was badly hit by the Dec. 26 earthquake and subsequent tsunami, which killed 340 Nias residents and left 10,000 people homeless.

The epicenter of Monday's earthquake struck about 120 km north of Nias. It was felt as far away as Thailand, Malaysia and Singapore.

"We figure there is now 1,000 people dead on Nias," Erni Ginting, a spokeswoman for the disaster center for Aceh and North Sumatra, told Reuters.

According to the state Antara news agency, the entire town of Aceh Singkil was leveled by the earthquake, although 10,000 were able to flee their homes.

The agency said the town center was devastated, with private and public buildings either cracked or collapsed, electricity poles and supply down and large cracks appearing on roads and streets. *AP, Reuters, AFP*

US life-and-death ...

From page A1

11th day without a feeding tube.

Terri Schiavo, 41, who is at the center of the latest battle in the US culture war, would probably die within a week or two after the tube was removed on March 18, according to doctors. Schiavo suffered catastrophic brain damage in 1990 when her heart stopped for several minutes because of a chemical imbalance.

Schiavo's parents, Bob and Mary Schindler, on Monday repeated their plea that their daughter be kept alive by having a feeding tube reinserted. To show their support for the Schindler couple, conservative activists demonstrated outside the White House to seek US President George W. Bush's intervention in prolonging the woman's life.

Parents vs husband

Arrayed against the Schindlers, conservatives and the so-called religious right are Terri's husband Michael Schiavo and liberal leaders, including Howard Simon, executive director of the American Civil Liberties Union's Florida chapter. According to Michael Schiavo, his wife told him years ago she would not want to be kept alive artificially under circumstances she was in at present.

The political momentum that propelled the Schiavo case onto the national legislative agenda has been building since 2003, when Michael Schiavo had his wife's feeding tube removed. About a week later, however, Florida Gov. Jeb Bush pushed through a special law giving himself the power to have it reinserted.

The Schindlers' emotional pleas inspired thousands of people to pressure the governor and Florida legislature to intervene in 2003 and again last week when the US Congress voted to ask a federal court to intervene.

The Schindlers' hopes of getting relief in federal court, however, were dashed when the US Supreme Court rejected an appeal by the parents to keep their daughter alive. The ruling marked the end of a dramatic four-day dash through the federal court system.

Prayers for Terri

As Terri Schiavo clung to life on Monday, police guarded her hospice room and demonstrators prayed outside for last-minute government intervention in the case.

"She's still communicating, she's still responding. She's emaciated, but she's responsive," Bob Schindler told reporters after a morning visit with his daughter, saying that she showed facial expressions when he hugged and kissed her.

George Felos, the attorney for Michael Schiavo, told reporters later that he had visited his client's wife for more than an hour on Monday and said she looked "very peaceful. She looked calm."

"I saw no evidence of any bodily discomfort whatsoever," Felos said, although he added her breathing seemed "a little on the rapid side" and her eyes were sunken.

Felos said the hospice room was decorated with flowers, had music playing and that Schiavo had a stuffed tabby cat under one arm.

Autopsy

Felos also said that the chief medical examiner for Pinellas County, Dr. John Thogmartin; had agreed to perform an autopsy. He said his client wanted definitive proof showing the extent of his wife's brain damage.

An attorney for the Schindler couple, David Gibbs III, said his clients also wanted an autopsy. "We would certainly support and encourage an autopsy to be done with all the unanswered questions," Gibbs said.

Terri Schiavo's parents again pressed President Bush, his brother Jeb Bush, and Congress to intervene to have the feeding tube reinserted. A small group of supporters protested outside the White House gates.

As Schiavo drew closer to death, extra police officers blocked the road in front of the Florida hospice, and an elementary school next door was closed so students could avoid the crowd.

About 100 protesters on Monday were on hand with signs and renewed prayers. Some in the crowd mocked the police by goose-stepping like Nazis.

President Bush's aides have said they had run out of legal options. Governor Bush said Monday that while it "made sense" to have federal courts review the case, he had to respect their decisions last week not to order the tube reinserted.

Guardianship issues

Jeb Bush later told Associated Press Television News that state lawmakers should closely examine issues of guardianship and when a feeding tube can be removed "if there's not an advance directive" such as a living will.

At least two more appeals filed by the state seeking the feeding tube's reconnection were pending, but those challenges were before a Florida appeals court that had rejected the governor's previous efforts in the case.

Bob Schindler said he feared the consequences of morphine that has been used to relieve his daughter's pain.

Morphin

"I have a great concern that they will expedite the process to kill her with an overdose of morphine because that's the procedure that happens," he said.

Felos disputed that, saying that hospice records show Schiavo was given two low doses of morphine—one on March 19 and another on March 26—and that she was not on a morphine drip. The records show that the second dose was given after nurses noticed "light moaning and facial grimacing and tensing of arms," he said.

Hospice spokesperson Mike Bell said federal rules kept him from discussing Schiavo specifically, but said "a fundamental part of hospice is that we would do nothing to either hasten or postpone natural death."

Comfort measures, including morphine drips, are used in consultation with a patient's guardian, physician and hospice care team, Bell said. *AP*

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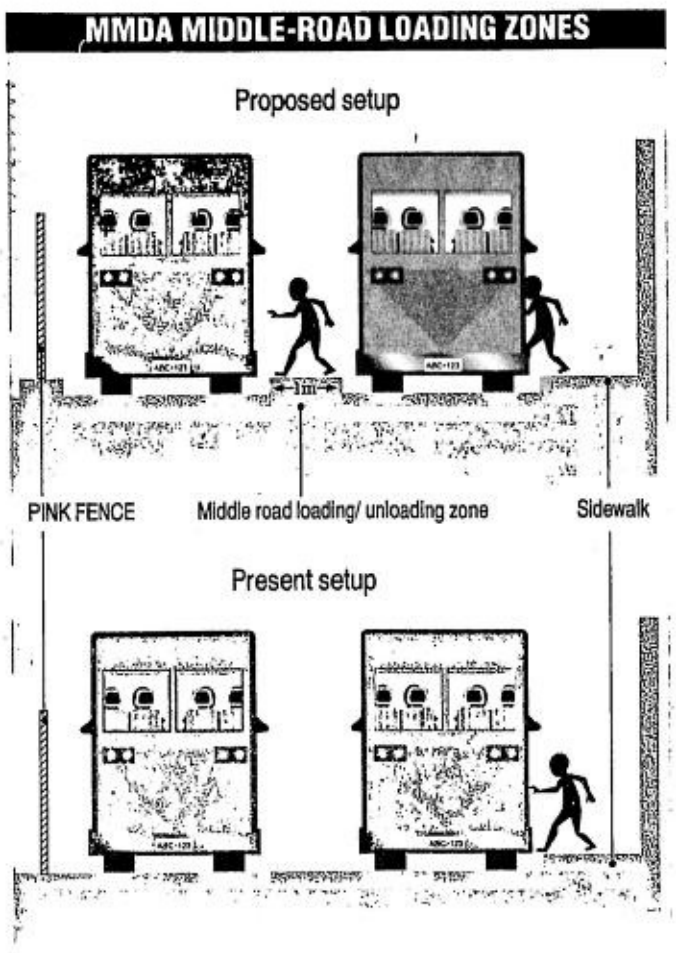
Mid-road loading bays on Edsa set



By Tarra V. Quismundo

IF YOU can't beat them, enclose them.

In its continuing bid to instill discipline in public utility drivers, the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA) will be putting up loading bays in the middle of the bus lane on Edsa fronting Camp Crame.

"The idea here is to speed up loading of passengers. It takes too much time for buses to load passengers," Fernando said.

The platforms, which would separate the two bus lanes, would be as high as the sidewalk and about a meter wide, said Fernando.

The concrete platforms, he added, are meant to prevent buses from swerving between the two lanes or stopping at an angle and blocking other buses.

"*Wala nang mangbubuwaya* (There will no longer be abuses)," said Fernando.

"In time, we are hoping the drivers will have some kind of discipline," said the MMDA chair, who had put up pink fences on portions of Edsa to organize intercity buses.

The loading and unloading platform would also organize passengers, as it would serve as an alternative waiting area apart from the sidewalk.

Fernando said that once set in place, the platforms would segregate buses according to destination. There could be between one or two of these loading platforms along the southbound lane of Edsa fronting Camp Crame

This project will be similar to the loading bays which the MMDA has installed along Edsa's northbound service road in front of Farmer's Plaza in Cubao.

The scheme in Cubao has so far worked for buses bound for Monumento and Fairview, said Angelito Vergel de Dios, MMDA Traffic Operations Center Executive director.

Fernando said construction of the loading platforms would begin as soon as possible and would be carried out in due consideration of Edsa's daily traffic volume.

A timer would also be installed to limit the time a bus would load and unload.

Following this, the MMDA chair said the agency would work on reinforcing the pink fences on the southbound lane of Edsa from Camp Crame to Ortigas.

The fences have for several times been toppled by motorists either by accident or on purpose.

"We're modifying our pink fences. There would be fixtures that are more permanent, because actually our pink fences are just temporary," said Fernando.

He said the MMDA was continuously observing and improving the pink fences.

"Once we or everybody's satisfied with it, we will make it permanent," said Fernando.

High hopes for cityhood status in San Juan

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

SAN JUAN officials are keeping their fingers crossed that they would be calling their town a city by the time they celebrate its 100th year.

"We are very optimistic we will soon be declared a city," Vice Mayor Leonardo Celles said. The town is celebrating its 98th anniversary this year. San Juan is one of the three remaining municipalities in the metropolis.

Town officials announced recently that the House of Representatives had already approved a bill filed by Rep. Ronaldo Zamora seeking to convert the municipality into a city. But former San Juan mayor, and now Sen. Jinggoy Estrada had said it was too early to file the bill because the town had not met cityhood requirements.

A town or cluster of barangays can be declared a component city if it has an annual income of at least P20 million in the last two years, a population of more than 150,000 and a land area of 100 sq. km. San Juan now earns about P400 million yearly, officials said. But it has a land area of only 5.94 sq. km. and a population of about 121,000 in 2002. Based on the number of voters in the last election, however, the population could be more than 150,000, said Mayor JV Ejercito.

If it meets two of the three requirements, it could stand a chance of making it as a city, he said.

Mayors say no to 4-day workweek scheme

By Jocelyn R. Uy and Tina G. Santos

AT LEAST six Metro Manila mayors are not inclined to support the proposed four-day workweek scheme devised by the government as a cost cutting measure for the summer.

Starting April 4 until the end of May, national government employees are set to enjoy three days off from work, but would still get the same salary.

Employees would be required to work 10 hours from Monday to Thursday, from 7:30 a.m. to 6:30 p.m., in an effort to help the government conserve its electricity and fuel stocks.

President Macapagal-Arroyo was expected to issue an administrative order implementing a four-day workweek at all national agencies soon. The administration adopted a similar scheme in 2002.

Though the administrative order would not cover local government units, Pasay City Mayor Wenceslao "Peewee" Trinidad, spokesperson of the Metro Mayor's League (MML), said he believed that the scheme is not the best solution to conserve energy.

Makati City Mayor Jejomar Binay, Pasig City Mayor Vicente Eusebio and Mandaluyong City Mayor Neptali "Boyet" Gonzales Jr. also shared the same sentiment, according to Trinidad.

Taguig City Mayor Fredie Tinga and Las Piñas City Mayor Imelda Aguilar were also not keen on the idea, he added.

Trinidad said the government should serve the people all the time.

"We are the front liners. We have to be there 24/7," he said, adding that a government would not be able to serve the public well with the presence of just half of its workforce.

He also stressed that there are other "small measures" to conserve energy, like limiting the use of air conditioners or turning off the lights during breaks.

Atienza said the scheme would be ineffective if implemented on the local government level.

"It may be practical for the national government but I don't think it would work for local government units," said Atienza, who is also the president of the Metro Mayors League.

"Most essential services are rendered by the LGUs and it would require a five-day service. It cannot function for four days only."

The government stands to generate P144 million in savings from the scheme, according to officials.

They said the savings would come from the lower costs of petroleum, lubricants, water and electricity used by the national agencies.

On the other hand, Binay said the scheme would mean less hours for official transactions between government and the private sector.

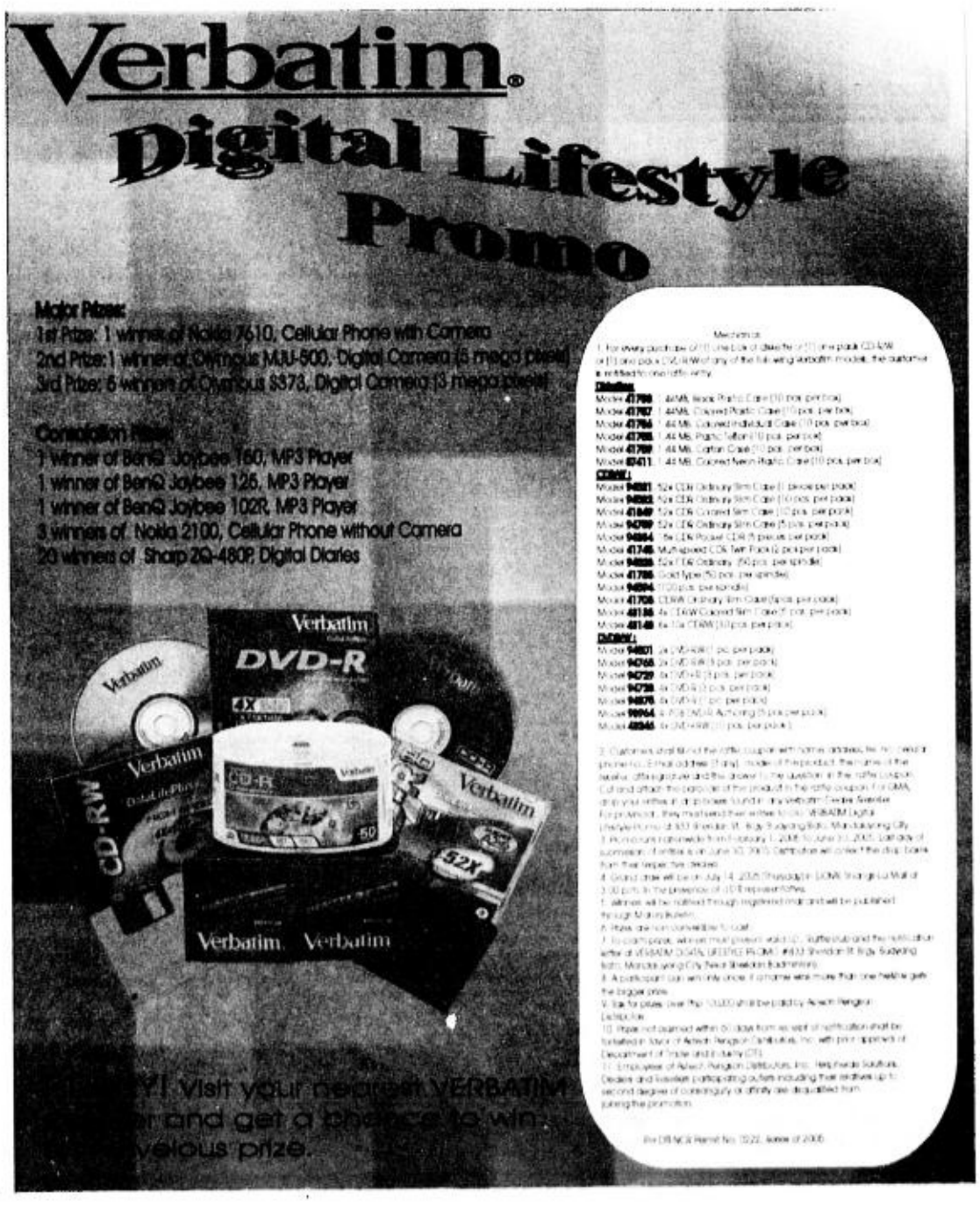
For local governments that deal with the private sector like Makati, the country's financial center, adopting the scheme would be impractical.

He added that any plan to include local government units (LGUs) in the scheme should be reconsidered.

Makati would not adopt the scheme if it is extended to LGUs, the mayor said.

"The idea of cost cutting is laudable, but surely the national government can think of other measures that will not be at the expense of providing service to the people," Binay stressed.

He also brushed aside the claim that employees could use the extra days to visit vacation spots, saying that the average worker's wages does not leave room for leisure trips.



Sad end for agent in Navotas

By Nancy C. Carvajal

A VICTIM twice over.

He had been stabbed and robbed. Then he was hit by a truck in the middle of a dark C-3 road in Navotas after midnight yesterday.

The mangled body of 40-year old Junie Agao, a buy and sell agent of Marcelo Sitio, Puting Bato North Bay Boulevard was discovered lying in the middle of the road by a Bantay Bayan volunteer, police said.

"The victim's body also bore several stab wounds," according to a report filed by SPO3 Daniel Ferrer.

Agao could have been struck by a truck after he fell to the ground, said police investigator PO2 Dante Majad.

"That stretch of the C-3 is dark at night that the driver could have failed to see the body of the victim," Majada said.

Missing bike

The victim's relatives also revealed that the victim's bicycle he had used for his buy and sell business was also missing.

Police said that based on the victim's wounds, it appeared that Agao had fought off his attackers before he was wounded.

The victim was wounded on the left side of his body and had a big incision on his left arm, police said.

NBI to beef up IPU security measures

By Margaux C. Ortiz

TO ENSURE the safety of visiting foreign dignitaries, the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) will assign intelligence and security agents during the International Parliamentary Union's week-long conference at the Philippine International Convention Center in April.

NBI Director Reynaldo Wycoco said the bureau would provide intelligence information on potential terrorist threats during the event.

"Although the Philippine National Police would be in-charge of the overall security, we would also be there to provide backup teams," Wycoco said.

He added that NBI agents stationed at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport would also escort the dignitaries upon their arrival.

"This event will definitely be as elaborate as the Easter holiday coverage," Wycoco said.

Meanwhile, Western Police District (WPD) Director Chief Supt. Pedro Bulaong met with hotel executives and building administrators during the weekend to discuss security operations for the IPU conference.

Bulaong said the WPD would also deploy sufficient law enforcers around the hotel establishments. Police officers would likewise be posted at strategic areas 24 hours a day. The police chief also said plainclothes policemen in the city's "tourist belt" and entertainment areas would ensure the safety of visiting delegates.

Seminar for women

WELL-KNOWN psychologist Dr. Lourdes "Honey" Arellano-Carandang will give a seminar-workshop for women on Saturday, April 2, from 2 to 5 p.m., at the Donada Art Gallery in Loyola Heights, Quezon City. The theme will be "Achieving Joy through Balance."

Donada Art Gallery is on the 2nd floor of Eagle Star Condominium along F. de la Rosa St., near Katipunan Avenue. A fee of P300 (merienda included) will be charged per participant. For inquiries and reservations, please call any of the following numbers: 645-2564 or 0917-6243045 (Lorna), 9200070 (Filo), or 9222759 (Majo).

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

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CLOSURE OF TUMANA ALTERNATE ROUTE

Motorists start feeling the squeeze

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

THE CLOSURE of an alternative road going to Quezon City has started to put the pressure on other routes and the situation may soon get worse, Marikina City officials said yesterday.

Currently, the closure of Tumana Road is only mildly felt because classes had just ended, said Marikina City administrator Melvin Cruz.

However, Cruz warned that once classes resume, the traffic jams would become worse.

Tumana Road, the shortest route from Marikina City to Katipunan Avenue in Quezon City, runs through Loyola Grand Villas, a private subdivision.

The subdivision closed its Tumana Gate to non-resident motorists on March 19.

Subdivision officials said they closed the road after the Marikina city government failed to fulfill its commitment to relocate some 1,200 squatter families which have been encroaching on prime subdivision land.

The commitment was reportedly given by Marikina in 1995 when it signed a right-of-way agreement with developer Soliven Group of Companies.

Annie Santiago, executive assistant to the president of the Soliven Group of Companies, added that the homeowners approved the closure.

"They were telling us that we should have had closed the gate much earlier," she said.

Santiago said homeowners had long been complaining of the noise generated by passing vehicles.

Apart from traffic jams, Cruz has other worries in relation to the road's closure.

"What will happen during emergencies?" he asked.

The city government has put up a fire station and health center near the subdivision for quick response during emergencies.

Forced to take longer routes, many motorists have been complaining.

But so far, the most that the local government has done is put up signs informing non-resident motorists that the road was closed to them.

"We are still deciding what course of action to take," Mayor Marides Fernando told the INQUIRER yesterday.

In the afternoon, she led a meeting with the department heads of the city to plan their next move.

The Shang Grand is a rare find. And it's coming up so fast. Definitely well-planned, well-made and will be finished well ahead of the rest.

– Atty. Margarita Trimor-Castillo
L.A., California, U.S.A.

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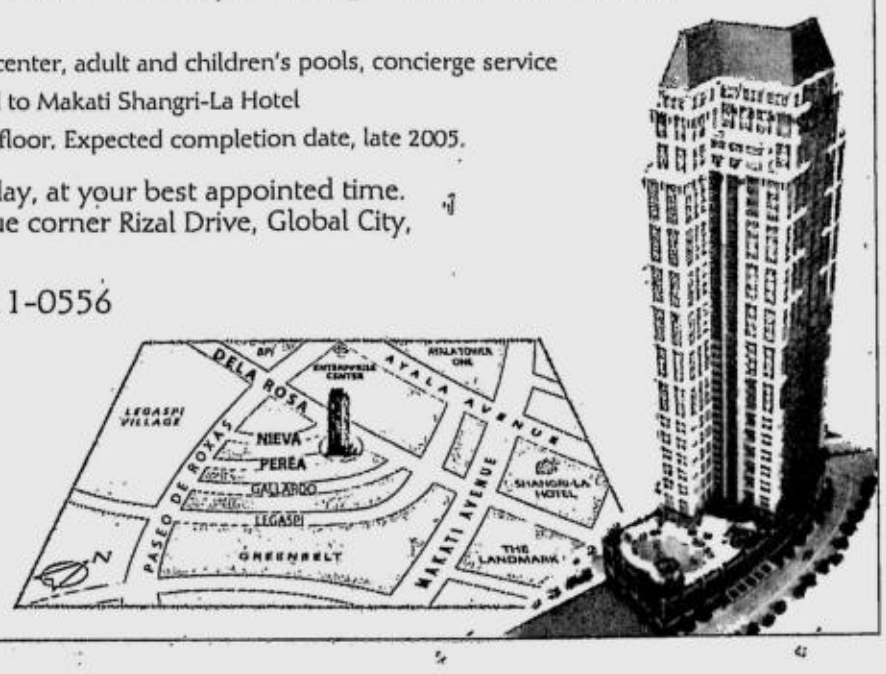

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Caloocan, Malabon to go dry on April 2

RESIDENTS of the cities of Caloocan and Malabon will have no water service for 25 hours starting April 2, the Maynilad Water Services Inc. announced yesterday.

The water service interruption will be due to the installation of a full bore flow meter on the mainline along Letre Road in Malabon and near Lescaño Street, Maynilad said in a statement.

To be affected in Caloocan are the areas of UE subdivision, Poblacion, Libis, Sangandaan, PNR compound, DM compound, and the streets of Mabini, Francisco Zamora, Rodriguez, Burgos, and Heroes del 96.

Malabon, too

In Malabon, Dagat-dagatan, including portions of North Bay Boulevard, Maliputo, Matangbaka, the area bounded by Letre Road, Barangays Tonsuya, San Agustin, Tañong, Tugatog and Acacia, will be waterless.

Meanwhile, Maynilad said other areas would have low pressure to no water. These include portions of West Grace Park, near 7th Avenue; D. Aquino, 10th Avenue, PNR track, Barangay Ibaba and Ningan in Malabon.

The interruption will start at 10 p.m. on Saturday until 11 p.m. on Sunday April 3, the Maynilad statement said.

Maynilad said the service interruption was part of a continuing program to upgrade and improve its water services to its customers in the West Zone. *Nancy C. Carvajal*

Programmer killed in QC pub shooting

By DJ Yap

A GIMMICK night at the Tribu Bar in Quezon City turned bloody midnight Monday when a young computer programmer was shot dead in the middle of a brawl.

Electronics and communications engineering graduate Karlos Alexei Entuna, 22, was hanging out with his friends at the crowded bar in Loyola Heights when a fight erupted between two groups of patrons at a nearby table, police said.

Suddenly, shots were fired. Two bullets hit Entuna in the head, killing him instantly, police said.

Investigators said, the suspect fled with two others on board a gray Mercedes Benz, and another who left on a red motorcycle.

Later yesterday, the companions of the suspect reported to the Criminal Investigation Division of the Central Police District, saying they had no hand in the incident.

Gunman identified

The group, consisting of two young men and a young woman, declined to be interviewed, but later identified the suspect to police as a certain Geoffrey Tan, a nursing student at Far Eastern University.

The group said they went with Tan, a neighborhood friend, at the bar, and were just having drinks when a group of patrons picked a fight with them, resulting in a brief fistfight.

They said they left the bar before things got serious, leaving Tan behind. When they were about to get inside the car, they said they heard three successive gunshots.

Tan then hurried into the car, and they drove off. The group said Tan again fired another round from the car window, while uttering curses.

The group said Tan got off along Katipunan Avenue. One of the young men said he only received word through a text message at about 3 a.m. that someone had been killed.

He said the group did not know for sure if it was Tan who had fired the three gunshots they had heard.

P02 Joseph Madrid said they would track down Tan, who could be charged with murder.

SPORTS
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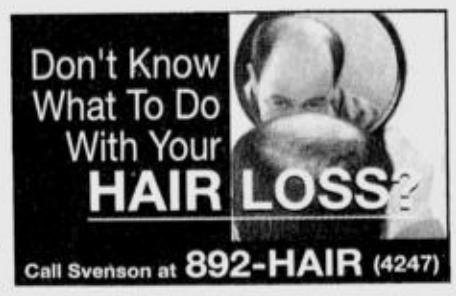
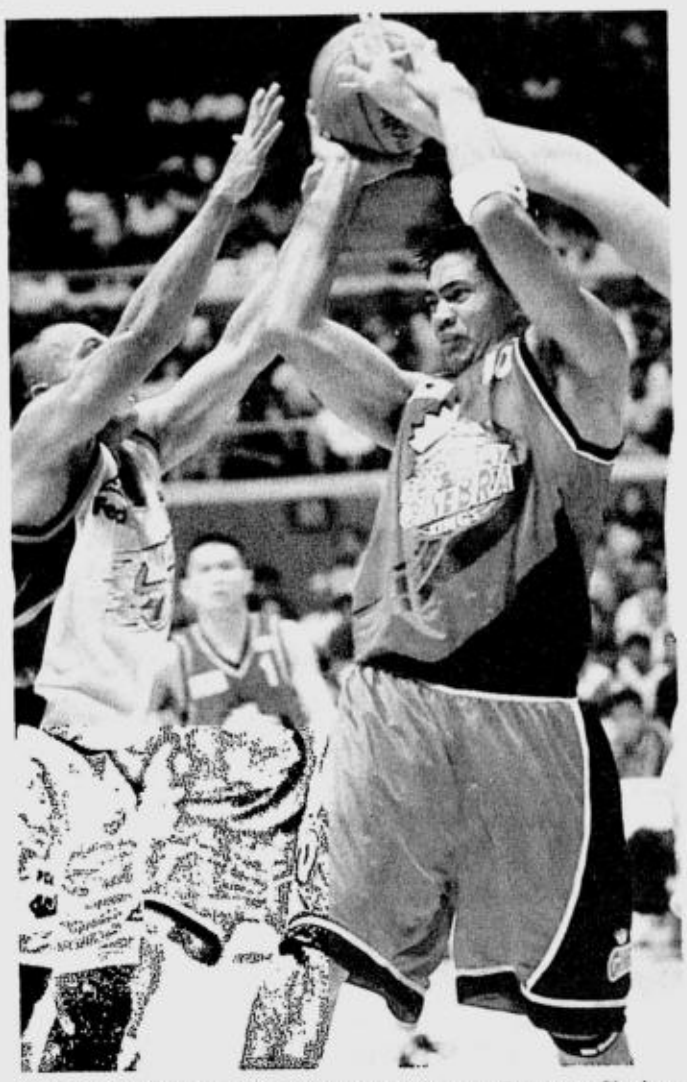


Hotdogs battle Kings as PBA wars resume



ROMEL Adducul's return to form is still suspect as Barangay Ginebra battles Purefoods tonight. AUGUST DELA CRUZ

PUREFOODS deals today with a Barangay Ginebra side trying to inch its way back to championship form following two consecutive conference titles.

STANDINGS	W	L
San Miguel	4	1
Purefoods	3	1
Talk N Text	2	1
Ginebra	2	1
FedEx	2	2
Shell	2	2
Red Bull	2	2
Coca-Cola	1	3
Alaska	1	3
Sta. Lucia	1	4

GAMES TODAY
(*Araneta Coliseum*)
4:45 p.m.—Purefoods vs Barangay Ginebra
7:35 p.m.—Coca-Cola vs Shell

But if you ask coach Ryan Gregorio, the TJ Hotdogs have to exorcise their own demons first before entertaining thoughts of beating the Gin Kings at the resumption of the Gran Matador PBA Fiesta Conference at the Araneta Coliseum.

"We're having problems with our execution," said Gregorio, whose squad is running second with a 3-1 record behind idle San Miguel Beer (4-1) after posting twin victories over Red Bull Barako and Coca-Cola.

"We have to be consistent every night," added Gregorio. "Hopefully we could work on it because there's still a lot of things to be done."

Just like the TJ Hotdogs, the Gin Kings are also on a two-game roll and will be coming into the game fresh from a long Holy Week break.

Coach Siot Tanquingcen and the Gin Kings eked out hard-earned victories over the Alaska Aces and the Tigers before the Lenten season.

Meanwhile, Coca-Cola tries to check a three-game slide when it goes up against Shell at 7:35 p.m. with a new reinforcement, Bakari Hendrix, who replaced the inefficient Jaja Richards.

Hendrix will be ranged against Shell's Wesley Wilson, hands-down the most talented reinforcement in the field.

"He's not flashy but he's certainly an intimidating force inside," said Shell coach Leo Austria of his import.

The Turbochargers (2-2) are locked in a three-way tie with the FedEx Express and the Red Bull Barako after losing to the Alaska Aces.

Import matchup will also be a crucial factor for both teams with the banger Antonio Smith clashing against Ginebra's versatile Eddie Elisma. The 6-foot-9 Elisma played for the TJ Hotdogs during the Reinforced conference last year.

"It's been a struggle for us the past three games," said Tanquingcen after the Gin Kings posted a second straight win at the expense of the Tigers to tie the Talk N Text Phone Pals at 2-1.

"We're not yet in sync but we're trying to get better each game." *June Navarro*

SEASON OPENER

PBL to honor brave Pacquiao

THE PHILIPPINE Basketball League (PBL), in its own little way, will also honor Filipino ring idol Manny Pacquiao.

Citing Pacquiao's courageous stand against Mexican Eric Morales in their blockbuster super featherweight bout in Las Vegas last week as a positive influence to the league's crop of young players, commissioner Chino Trinidad yesterday announced the PBL is conferring to the 26-year-old pride of General Santos City the award it dubbed "Gawad ng Kagitingan."

Trinidad said the special rite will be held as part of the special program ushering the 2005 season of the league this Saturday at the Makati Coliseum.

"We're giving Manny Pacquiao this award for the great fighting spirit he showed against Erik Morales," said Trinidad during the weekly PSA Forum at the Manila Pavilion sponsored by Red Bull, Supermax, Circure and Pagcor.

This marks the second time the PBL is honoring a Filipino athlete for exemplary showing in an international competition after Olympian and taekwondo jin Mary Antoinette Rivero in the last Open championship.

Pacquiao lost the fight by a close unanimous decision.

Trinidad said he would personally invite Pacquiao to receive the award, and at the same time be the special guest in the season-opening tournament Unity Cup.

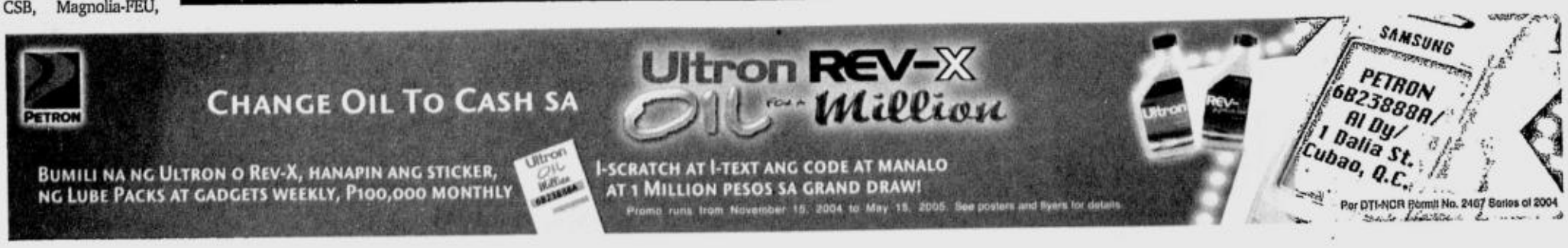
Montaña is aiming to win back-to-back titles after bagging its breakthrough championship last conference, but is expected to get a lot of opposition from the rest of the pack that includes Welcoat-CSB, Magnolia-FEU, Toyota Otis-Letran, Granny Goose, Bacus Energy Drink (formerly Air Philippines) and newcomers Harbour Centre and Nenaco-San Beda.

"This is going to be a quick and exciting tournament especially with new teams like Harbour Centre and Nenaco-San Beda getting into the picture," said Trinidad, now in his sixth season as head of the country's premiere amateur league.

No change in format has been made, with the top two teams at the end of the eliminations earning outright berths to the semis and the other two at the bottom getting eliminated.

The remaining four squads then vie for two semis slots, with the Nos. 3 and 4 teams enjoying a twice-to-beat edge.

The semis is a best-of-three series and the finals a best-of-five affair.



Pacquiao failed, but did a Pinoy whale win in Vegas?

BARE EYE

Recah Trinidad

LOS ANGELES, California—An old book, "Havana," is a terrific read. There are still the original details, vivid as the bar and streets Ernest Hemingway had haunted while writing the "Old Man and the Sea," for everybody to enjoy and see.

To the first-time visitor, the most distinct pictures in Fidel Castro's Cuba are the vintage 1930 cars, perfect for the museum but still in full service oftentimes as taxis, on historic cobblestone streets over which loom monumental buildings totally untouched by modernity.

The continuing struggle, the life and longing of the native Cubano, is an altogether intriguing modern-day story.

In that Hemingway masterpiece, the old man Santiago finally landed a great marlin after having gone fishless for over 80 days out at sea.

What would follow was a long, bloody struggle, with Santiago finally landing his catch but succeeding to take it to shore only after the great fish had been devoured by sharks, reduced to bare bones.

***

This little tale will also be about a fishing expedition, not for a marlin but a whale, a most unusual species.

In a previous column, this whale had merely appeared as an unidentified heavyweight.

This very important fellow, a big backer of boxer Manny Pacquiao, had the great luck of having stayed in the exclusive Villa 1 inside MGM Grand, a sleeping place reserved only for kings and the richest of the rich.

Although that big-spending heavyweight was not named, his identity subsequently became known based on information from his visitors and friends in the $20,000 (P1.08 million)-a-night grand villa.

"No need to mention his name, *alam na dito, napaka*-immoral *ng mga lintek na 'yan, daming naghihirap dito*," texted one newswoman from Manila.

***

The story about this secret supporter of Manny Pacquiao was supposed to have ended before the boxer's homecoming.

In fact, the story should've been disregarded after aides and boot-lickers around the secret heavyweight claimed the Filipino's stay in the P1-million-a-night MGM villa was purely complimentary.

Case closed. Nobody was at fault.

This reporter after seeing Pacquiao wage a great, losing battle, sent his things home, filled a small bag with the barest necessities then took off for Havana to help select and pick a coach for a boxing program of the Governors' League of the Philippines.

Of course, before the Cuban trip, we invested and asked a trusted fellow to do some detective work.

His specific task was to determine the rare people that are granted complimentary stay in the opulent MGM Grand villa.

***

Here are the findings: No living Filipino could've qualified for that claimed complimentary stay.

Not even Pacquiao's heavyweight backer, no matter how rich he may be, would've been granted the distinction.

For one, the MGM Villa is offered free to high rollers with a table credit line of no less than $5 million.

Rarities ushered into the villa are fetched by Lear jet from anywhere in the United States.

They are serviced by stretch limousine anywhere they travel out and back into the hotel.

They are provided personal cooks, masseurs, the works, during their stay.

If Bill Gates, say, happened to have been a gambler, he would have qualified.

But definitely, no Filipino would've been in that class, claimed our detective whose services, by the way, were offered free—complimentary.

***

Maybe if, say, MGM happens to be negotiating to buy an island to be developed into a casino in the Philippines, the secret Pinoy heavyweight, with his association and clout, would have gotten the villa free.

So I asked: What if MGM is trying to sell slot machines to the Philippines?

No way, explains my detective-friend, that deal is too small, peanuts.

So would you say Ferdinand Marcos himself would've not made it there?

No, he may have been one of the richest, but his riches were all kept secret.

So who among the rich entertainers could've lived at Villa 1?

OK, maybe Sinatra, or Elvis, but I am not too sure, either.

Who was the last guy known to have gotten a free stay at the villa?

Jim Peng, a Taiwanese communications mogul, who raked in millions dealing special radio sets for private use around the US.

***

Who's Jim Peng?

He was one of the great rollers. He impregnated his secretary in Taipei, took the girl to the US, where she gave birth, but the mistress was subsequently killed by Peng's wife who caught up with her in Orange County in the mid-1990s.

You really did your work, I commended my friend.

Peng was a rarity. He was pampered like a king. He's still around. His wife has been granted parole, but I don't think they're living together.

Now, are you saying that the claim about the RP heavyweight getting complimentary stay at the MGM villa was pure fiction?

Of course. Unless he also gambled very big in Vegas.

But the RP heavyweight was never seen even once around the gaming tables at MGM.

You don't get me. The great rollers do it upstairs, somewhere else.

What? This is getting to be crazier.

But there's such a place as Hidden Las Vegas where extraordinary gamblers do their thing, away from the eyes of the public.

So how do they call these big, rare gamblers?

Not mere high rollers, they are called Whales!

Why whales?

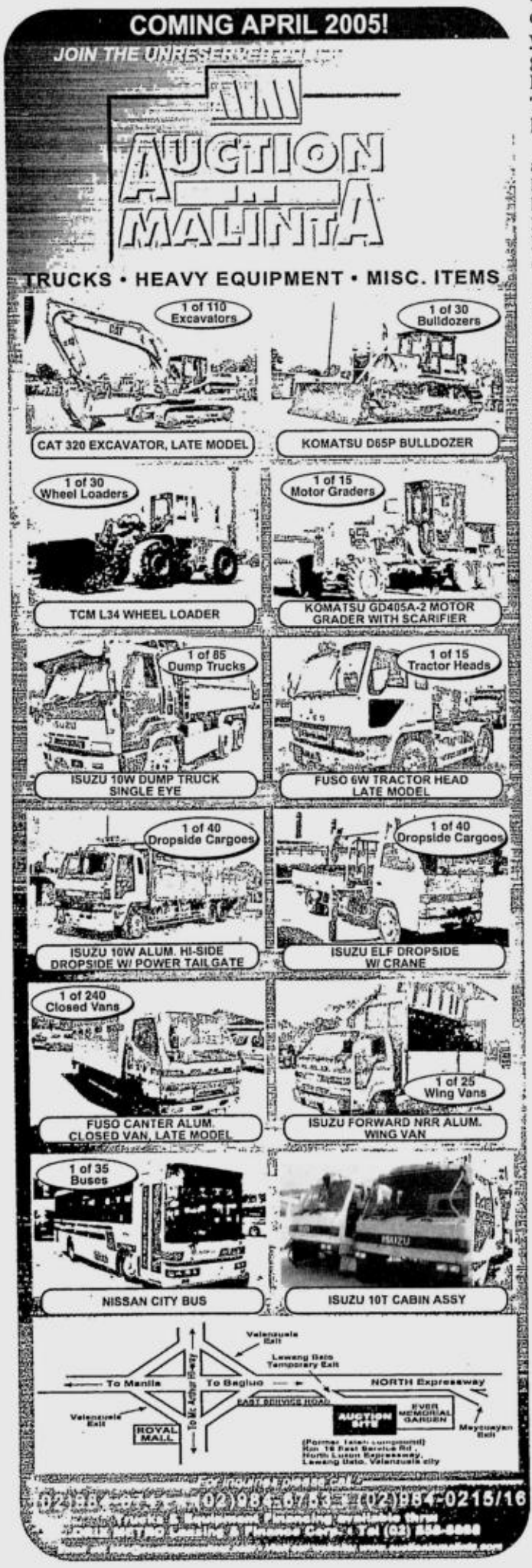
'Coz they're truly big, grand, not mere heavyweights.

Ortiz considers fight with Elorde an honor

FORMER world champion Carlos Ortiz reveres the late boxing great Gabriel Elorde and considers his fight with the Filipino lefty as the most memorable in his colorful career.

"Talk about my contribution to sports, and I would say my fight with Elorde would be it. It's really been a great honor to be in the ring with him," said the 70-year old Hall of Famer at the weekly PSA Forum yesterday at the Manila Pavilion.

Ortiz arrived in town last week to personally grace the Elorde Annual Awards, where he will receive the Elorde Memorial Trophy given to former champions who fought the man they referred to as 'Da Flash' during the Filipino's pro career.



Dandan gains clash vs top HK bet today

By Musong R. Castillo

KYLE Joshua Dandan pulled out a 6-2, 6-0 victory over compatriot Christian Canlas yesterday even as the big guns of the 16th Mitsubishi Lancer International Junior Tennis championships finally get going today.

The top 16 seeds plunge into action after first-round byes and Dandan, the brightest local hope here, advanced against 11th seed Lai Xiaopeng of Hong Kong, a foe he has not beaten in three previous meetings.

Dandan ran the qualifier Canlas to the ground with a solid baseline game under punishing heat at the Rizal Memorial hardcourts, needing just 45 minutes in underscoring his preparedness to slug it out with the best in this event ranked as the 12th toughest in the world by the ITF.

"Maybe I was just familiar with his (Canlas') game," Dandan said. "I have a tough opponent tomorrow and it was good that I was not made to exert too much [effort] out there today."

The 16-year-old Dandan is trying to uphold his lofty status in Asia with a decent finish here after getting an invitation to play for the Asian team in a European Tennis Circuit in Europe in May.

Meanwhile, the girls carrying the fight for the Philippines dropped out one after the other, with only Fil-German Anja Vanessa Peters left with a flicker of hope of advancing.

Peters' match with Canadian Chantal Beetham was called off on account of darkness with the Filipina trailing, 6-7 (4), 6-all.

ON THE VERGE: Filipina-German Anja Vanessa Peters returns against Canada's Chantal Beetham whom she trails, 6-7, 6-6, when play was halted on account of darkness. REM ZAMORA

Beetham will serve when their match resumes at 9 a.m. today.

Five local boys advanced, but four of them marched on at the expense of their compatriots. Only Michael Basco defeated a foreigner when Michael Motyka of Slovakia retired, trailing 6-4, 3-0.

Basco, the world No. 917 given a wild card here, goes up against tournament No. 1 Vivek Shokeen of India in the second round.

Miguel Lorenzo Narvaez, a wild card, bundled out qualifier Angelo James Patrimonio, 6-0, 6-0, while Nestor Celestino also scored a similar 6-0, 6-0 romp over Russell Arcilla Jr.

Pablo Olivarez, a grandson of the former Parañaque mayor, tripped Joshua Tan Ho, 6-4, 6-1, to earn a second-round date with 12th seed Thomas Habsuda of Australia, the world No. 101.

Three other locals in the boys' division were also eliminated, with Nico de Dios taking a 6-3, 6-4 beating from Brit Christopher Llewelyn; Jandrick de Castro losing to Johnny Hamui of the US, 6-0, 6-1 and Ralph Barte absorbing a 6-4, 6-1 loss to Canadian Jonathan David.

Denise Dy, a Fil-American using this event as a tryout for the Southeast Asian Games team, didn't show much promise in dropping a 2-6, 6-4, 2-6 decision to American Emmy Fritz-Krockov in just under two hours.

The 14-year-old Dy was completely outplayed by the hard-hitting Fritz-Krockov, who imposed her will again after dropping the second set by winning the first two games of the third.

Anna Christina Patrimonio was completely outclassed in a 0-6, 1-6 loss to Japanese Erina Kikuchi, while Trudy Amoranto also scored just a point in bowing to Ling Zhang of Hong Kong

Reyes tours US for clinics, scout mission

NATIONAL coach Chot Reyes leaves today to attend a two-week long series of basketball clinics in four key cities in the United States.

Reyes departs for St. Louis to watch the US NCAA Final Four matches pitting Louisville versus Illinois U and Michigan State against University of North Carolina.

He will be staying in the US until April 2 to attend "wall-to-wall" coaching clinics in the annual Final Four convention arranged by the National Amateur Basketball Coaches.

Next stop, from April 4-7, is Detroit where he will watch three practice sessions of the Pistons.

His trip there was set up by Marivic Lardizabal, the Filipino secretary of Pistons coach Larry Brown, who also agreed to a session with Reyes.

REYES

From Detroit, Reyes travels next to Los Angeles where a scrimmage has been set up for him to evaluate the worthiness of Filipino-American players Joe Devean, a 6-7 forward from University of Texas in El Paso, Alex Cabognot, who broke all the high school records of Mark Caguioa at the University of Hawaii, and Kevin Delafu.

Reyes' April 7-11 visit was arranged by Loy Allado, father of Alaska Aces center Don Allado, and player-agent Mike Gonzales.

Finally, Reyes drops by Sacramento up to April 14, watching three Kings practices and their game against the LA Lakers, a date arranged by Kings assistant coach Pete Carrill, architect of the famed Princeton offense from which Reyes patterned the Coca-Cola Tigers' offense.

Scheduled to return today from a three-week scouting mission of the South Korean and Japanese teams is Reyes' deputy, Binky Favis.

Bumgarner seeks 2nd kart win

REIGNING Asian karting queen Michele Bumgarner of M&M Racing expects another tough battle against arch rival and Cebu Racing Group lead driver Matteo Guidicelli as the 2005 Shell Helix Superkarting Series stages its second leg this weekend at the newly refurbished Boom na Boom Kart Track of the CCP Complex on Roxas Boulevard.

The pretty Bumgarner, daughter of an American businessman and his Filipina wife from Leyte, prevailed in the kickoff leg after pulling through in a down-the-wire showdown with Guidicelli.

Aside from Guidicelli, Bumgarner sees Indy Villalon and Marlon Stockiner of Birel-Fila, Arvin Drueco and even her younger brother, Mark, as equally strong rivals for the coveted Karter of the Year plum.

Also favored in this series sanctioned by the Automobile Association of the Philippines are Paolo Eslao and Jean Marcelo.

Eslao is eyeing his second victory in the KT Light series over actor Onemig Bondoc and Jeje Villena, while Marcelo is seeking another triumph over Raymond Bustamante and Santiago Garcia in the Formula Rotax Novice class.

BUMGARNER

Ramirez sacks 56 PSC consultants

By Marc Anthony Reyes

TO MAKE ends meet, the Philippine Sports Commission has terminated at least 56 consultants and coordinators on top of cutting down the water and electricity consumption in sports facilities it manages like the Philsports and the Rizal Memorial Sports Complex.

PSC officer-in-charge Butch Ramirez said they also have an option to fire at least 300 contractual employees who have risen in number with the series of changes of leadership in the agency since its creation in 1990.

"But I'd rather not do that," said Ramirez. "We decided to just maximize their services to better serve the national athletes."

The PSC has adopted cost-cutting measures since the agency, which has been tasked to refurbish the SEAG venues at the RMSC, did not receive an additional budget for the purpose.

The PSC also has to take care of some 1,000 national athletes now after the Class C bets were reinstated complete with their old monthly stipend and meal allowance.

"If not for the P160 million (raised through fund-raising efforts) from First Gentleman Mike Arroyo," said Ramirez, "the athletes' foreign exposure would be put in jeopardy."

RAMIREZ

The funds from the First Gentleman Foundation are being disbursed exclusively for the athletes' training for the 2005 Southeast Asian Games the country will host on Nov. 27 to Dec. 5.

He said 273 athletes and coaches will fly to China to hone their skills as part of the RP-China partnership that began back in 1975 and reaffirmed early this year.

The athletes begin their China training next month. Most of the Filipino bets will fly in May and will be staying till September.

The SEAG bets will be working out in training camps in Xiamen, Shanghai and Beijing.

In need of repairs at the RMSC are the tennis center, track and field stadium, softball/baseball stadium and the badminton hall. Ramirez said the local governments in other venues are doing their share to refurbish the playing sites.

"We are in full support of the Philsoc (Philippine SEAG Organizing Committee) and the POC (Philippine Olympic Committee)," added Ramirez, who was tapped as PSC chief in interim capacity since January.

At the same time, Ramirez said the country's athletes have been diligently training in line with host's aim to win the Games' overall title.

"While Philsoc is busy looking for the money and other stakeholders are trying to start the repair of the venues, our athletes have been religiously training," assured Ramirez. "There's really nothing to worry about. We still have a strong chance."

But Ramirez noted that officials from 17 out of the 41 sports in the calendar have yet to finalize their training programs and budget proposals.

"We would like to finish the discussion on budget proposals immediately so that athletes can focus on their training," he said.

Aside from the China-bound bets, some 400 athletes from taekwondo, judo, gymnastics, wrestling, pencak silat, wushu and billiards have been training at the RMSC.

Some 100 nationals from track and field, archery, boxing and weightlifting are training in Baguio, while about the same number from football, muay thai, dancesport and karatedo are working out at the Ultra in Pasig.

"There are also good signs for us going into the SEA Games," said Ramirez, citing pencak silat's six-gold medal haul in the World Series in France and the silver medal of gymnast Roel Ramirez in the World Cup in the United States.

With a report from Jasmine Payo

PBA photo contest up

ACCEL, one of the country's top producers of sports apparel, has joined hand with the Philippine Basketball Association for the Aceel-PBA Photo Contest. The contest is open to all photographers from newspapers and magazines covering the PBA games. Participants can shoot from a wide array of subjects including PBA personalities, audience and game situations. All entries must be published, must be sized 8' x 10' and mounted on a 12' x 14' illustration board. For more details, call 09209055045 or 09184767911.

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Honey Moon Tea is available at all leading drugstores and selected supermarkets nationwide.

Streaking Mavs trip skidding Pistons; LeBron powers Cavs

AUBURN HILLS, Michigan—Josh Howard scored 24 points and Dirk Nowitzki added 22 as the Dallas Mavericks beat the slumping Detroit Pistons 95-88 Monday night.

The Mavericks have won six of seven, while the defending champions lost for the fourth time in five games.

Reserve Keith Van Horn added 17 points for Dallas, while Chauncey Billups led the Pistons with 26 and Richard Hamilton added 21. The Mavericks reserves outscored Detroit's 26-2.

Pistons coach Larry Brown (surgery) missed his ninth straight game. The Pistons are 8-8 without Brown this year.

In Charlotte, North Carolina, Vince Carter scored 39 points and the New Jersey Nets hung on to beat the Bobcats, 95-91.

Carter, who scored 15 of the Nets' 19 points in the first quarter, helped New Jersey snap a two-game losing streak.

In Orlando, Steve Francis had 30 points, 10 assists and six rebounds, and Grant Hill and Dwight Howard each had a double-double in just the Magic's second victory in 12 games, a 109-102 triumph over the lowly Atlanta Hawks.

The Magic snapped a three-game skid as they try to keep pace with Philadelphia and Indiana, who hold the final two playoff spota in the Eastern Conference. Orlando had lost 10 of 11.

Hill had 16 points and 10 rebounds and Howard had 17 points and 11 boards.

With the league's worst record, the Hawks (11-59) have lost 11 straight games and 22 of their last 23.

Miller time

In Milwaukee, Reggie Miller scored 12 of his 22 points in the third quarter to lead the Indiana Pacers to a 90-76 rout of the Bucks.

Miller, who was ejected in the second quarter of a four-point loss Saturday at Chicago, made 5-of-7 3-pointers and sat out the entire fourth quarter as the Pacers held a comfortable lead. His night was definitely finished as he gave his shoes to a pair of Indiana fans with about 3 minutes left in the game.

In Chicago, Eddy Curry scored 25 points and the Bulls nearly blew an 18-point fourth quarter lead before beating the Memphis Grizzlies, 94-86, for their sixth straight victory.

Ben Gordon added 17 points for the Bulls, while Tyson Chandler had 14 rebounds and scored 13 points, including a pair of free throws with 12.4 seconds left to put Chicago up six.

The Bulls (38-31) improved to a season-best seven games over .500 and are chasing the Wizards for the fourth playoff spot in the East.

In Salt Lake City, Tracy McGrady scored 44 points and Mike James had 14 of his 16 in the second half for the Houston Rockets, who beat the Jazz, 99-85, for just the second time in the last 17 meetings at Utah.

Utah tried everything from switching defenders to changing defenses and nothing worked to stop McGrady. By the time he started missing in the fourth quarter, Houston already had a 12-point lead. McGrady made 14 of his first 17 shots and finished 15-for-21.

Mehmet Okur scored 25, Matt Harpring had 18 points and nine rebounds for Utah.

In Phoenix, Joe Johnson had eight points and Steve Nash five during a fourth-quarter run that carried the Suns over the Denver Nuggets, 123-114.

The Suns snapped a Denver winning streak for the second time this month. The Nuggets had won eight straight when Phoenix beat them 106-101 in Denver on March 13, and they won their next six before visiting Phoenix.

Johnson also had 23 points, Steven Hunter 14 and Quentin Richardson 13 for the Suns.

Carmelo Anthony, who had only nine points against the Suns two weeks ago, led the Nuggets with 22. Andre Miller had 19 points, seven assists and six rebounds.

Hot James

In New Orleans, LeBron James scored 44 points, igniting the Cleveland Cavaliers' comeback from a 17-point, fourth-quarter deficit for a 109-108 overtime victory over the Hornets.

Drew Gooden, who hadn't scored since the first quarter, clinched the victory with a three-point play after he rebounded James' miss and scored as he was fouled with 6.4 seconds left in the extra period.

In Portland, Oregon, Gilbert Arenas scored 28 points and Larry Hughes added 25 to lead the Washington Wizards past the Trail Blazers, 114-106.

Etan Thomas, starting in place of the injured Brendan Haywood, had 10 points and 14 rebounds for the Wizards, who maintained a one-game lead over Chicago in the race for fourth place in the Eastern Conference.

Bittersweet homecoming

In Sacramento, California, Chris Webber had 20 points and 10 rebounds in his first game back at Arco Arena since the Kings traded him last month, but Cuttino Mobley scored 30 points to spoil that return.

Webber's homecoming was more bitter than sweet as Sacramento thumped the Philadelphia 76ers, 118-109. The sellout crowd showered him with constant cheers, including a lengthy standing ovation during pregame introductions—but the Kings controlled most of the second half with the up-tempo offense Webber so loved to play.

In Oakland, California, Baron Davis had 33 points and Troy Murphy added 19 points and 19 rebounds for Golden State, which tripped New York, 108-100. The Warriors have won five of their last six games and nine overall since acquiring Davis in a Feb. 24 trade from New Orleans. Golden State had won only 16 games all season before Davis' arrival.

Mickael Pietrus had 17 points for the resurgent Warriors (25-45). *AP*

Atkins, Bryant shrug off latest LA controversy

EL SEGUNDO, California—Drama seems to follow the Los Angeles Lakers, win or lose.

During the past five years, when the Lakers were reaching four NBA Finals and winning three of them, there was always something between Shaquille O'Neal and Kobe Bryant, Shaq and coach Phil Jackson, or Kobe and Phil.

Now that O'Neal is playing in Miami and Jackson is out of coaching—at least for the moment—the Lakers are Bryant's team.

And they're losing. The Lakers have dropped eight straight games, their second-longest losing streak since moving from Minneapolis to Los Angeles in 1960.

Bryant was at the center of another controversy on Monday, albeit not of his own doing.

First-year Lakers guard Chucky Atkins was asked before Sunday's game against the Philadelphia 76ers what offseason moves he'd make to improve the team.

"I ain't no GM. Ask Kobe. He's the GM. It's his team," Atkins said.

The 30-year-old Atkins seemed to backtrack almost immediately. Following the Lakers' 96-89 loss to the 76ers, he acknowledged that while confidence and morale were down, team members were "too professional to point fingers."

Following Monday's practice, Atkins acknowledged it was "very possible" that what he meant to say wasn't what came out, although he insisted the reporter questioning him had been trying to get him to say something negative about Bryant for weeks.

"I don't think you should try to divide my team," Atkins said. "We're not going to splinter. Kobe's my man. Me and Kobe have developed a relationship where anything I have to say to him, I can say to his face. I'm in a no-win situation."

Only Atkins knows his true feelings.

"We're in a bad situation right now," he said. "We know that."

The Lakers (32-37), who will try to end their current skid on Tuesday against the New York Knicks, lost their last 10 games of the 1993-94 season to finish with a 33-49 record. That was the last time they failed to qualify for the playoffs, something that will happen this year barring a complete turnaround in the last 13 games, and prolonged slumps by two of the three teams immediately above them.

Bryant, the NBA's second-leading scorer, supported Atkins.

"We really didn't have much of a conversation (Monday)," Bryant said. "He was pretty adamant about how it happened, that it was taken out of context. Everybody here sticks together. We're not going to let anybody divide us.

"If you guys are here to stir something up, you're not going to get it out of me. All we want to do is come here, work hard, play basketball. We had a great day of work. There's nothing going on."

Lakers coach Frank Hamblen smiled when asked about the latest controversy, mentioning the problems the team had while it was winning.

"You always expect harmony to some degree," he said. "Guys aren't going to be best friends. You've got to work together. Anything that's said in the paper is probably out of frustration." *AP*

VINCE Carter soars for one o

Williams sister act loses appeal

KEY BISCAYNE, Florida—Venus and Serena Williams renew their sibling rivalry Tuesday night absent the fanfare that usually accompanies such showdowns.

They're not playing in a Grand Slam tournament, or even a final. They'll meet for the first time since July 2003 in the quarterfinals of the Nasdaq-100 Open, with Venus hoping to end a streak of six consecutive losses to her kid sister.

"Definitely not the round we'd like to meet in," Venus said. "But in the end, it is what it is."

The matchup was sealed late Monday when Serena extended her Key Biscayne winning streak to 21 matches by edging No. 15-seeded Elena Likhovtseva of Russia, 6-4, 1-6, 6-4. Less than two hours earlier, Venus advanced by beating qualifier Catalina Castano of Colombia, 6-4, 2-6, 6-1.

With the stakes more modest than in the past, the hype will be, too. Only a handful of reporters were on hand to ask the sisters about their latest meeting.

"I guess the only setback with playing each other is that only one of us can win," Venus said. "We both want each other to do so well that that's the only sad part, I think."

The sisters started playing each other as inner-city grade-schoolers on the crumbling courts of Compton, California. This time they'll play 90 minutes down Interstate 95 from Palm Beach Gardens, where they live.

ATTENTION in the Nasdaq-100 Open will be focused on the comebacking Justine Henin-Hardenne and pin-up girl Maria Sharapova.

They split two previous meetings at Key Biscayne—in 1999 and 2002.

Wimbledon champion Maria Sharapova of Russia laughed when asked about the fan appeal.

"To tell you the truth, I could care less," she said. "There are other things that I'm more worried about."

Sharapova joined the sisters in the quarterfinals, as did Belgians Justine Henin-Hardenne and Kim Clijsters, who continued comebacks from injury, adding to the subplots that have taken the spotlight away from tennis' sister act.

Sharapova eliminated No. 23 Shinobu Asagoe of Japan 6-1, 6-2 and will play Henin-Hardenne next.

Henin-Hardenne, seeded 19th and playing in her first tournament since the US Open, advanced by beating Alicia Molik, 6-4, 2-6, 6-2. The three-time Grand Slam champion had been sidelined by a virus and knee injury.

Clijsters, unseeded and coming back from wrist surgery, beat No. 5 Anastasia Myskina of Russia, 6-3, 6-4. *AP*

Australian college star NBA-bound

SALT LAKE CITY—Australian Olympian Andrew Bogut will enter the NBA draft, forgoing his final two years of US college eligibility to possibly become the No. 1 choice.

"I have no regrets and full-speed ahead," the 2.14-meter center said on Monday.

Bogut, the leading vote-getter on the AP All-America team, averaged 20.4 points and 12.2 rebounds while leading the University of Utah to a 29-6 season, which ended with a loss to Kentucky in the regional semifinals of the US NCAA.

"I feel the time is right to move on to the next level of basketball," Bogut said.

Bogut has hired agent David Bauman of SFX Basketball, making him ineligible to play again at a US college. Bogut plans to stick around Salt Lake City for a few weeks, then head to Washington, D.C., to begin preparing for pre-draft workouts.

Bogut considered leaving after last season, when he was the Mountain West Conference rookie of the year, but a visit to Australia from new Utah coach Ray Giacoletti convinced Bogut to put off the NBA at least another year.

Bogut is expected to be, at the very least, a lottery pick in the NBA draft and possibly the first player chosen overall with his exceptional ball-handling skills for a center. Bogut led Utah in scoring and rebounding. *AP*

THAWORN Wiratchant's form will make purists cringe. AFP

Odd sw

KUALA LUMPUR [illegible] has proven that [illegible] unorthodox golf [illegible] Tour can reap [illegible]

With a unique style [illegible] golf purist cringe, the [illegible] nificent five-stroke victory [illegible] Jakarta Standard Chartered Open on Sunday, which [illegible] the sixth million-dollar [illegible] Tour.

His check of $166,666 [illegible] ond place on the order of $234,531, approximately [illegible] compatriot Thongchai Jaidee pushed him to third place [illegible] money list with [illegible]

Phelps ready t

INDIANAPOLIS—Six-time Olympic gold medalist Michael Phelps is weary of the exhibition tours, training swims and injury rehabilitation. It's time, he believes, to start winning races again.

"The most important thing is just getting back in rhythm, getting into a groove," he said on Monday during a conference call. "Right now, I'm feeling pretty good, and I hope to feel pretty good this next week."

Phelps is about to embark on his most ambitious agenda since the Athens Game[s] compete in s[ome] world swimmi[ng] on Friday in In[dia]

As usual, he [will] tion on a ca[lendar] Olympians fro[m] alities such as Amanda Bea[rd] and Kaitlin Sa[ndeno]

If things g[o] qualify for thr[ee] up the possibil[ity] impressive 10

Agassi wants Davis format altered

AGASSI AP

MIAMI—American Andre Agassi believes the Davis Cup is too time-consuming for top players and wants a change in format to entice the biggest names in the sport to take part.

"It's not realistic to expect all the players to play all the time," said Agassi, who came out of Davis Cup retirement for his country's first round defeat to Croatia in California earlier this month.

"The schedule is difficult as it is. The wear and tear on one's body these days versus when I first came on is a whole different animal.

"Guys hit the ball bigger, every movement is more violent. There's much more injury. It's harder to do this for a long period of time, playing Davis Cup every year."

Top 10 players like Swiss Roger Federer, Spain's Carlos Moya and Britain's Tim Henman have all chosen not to play Davis Cup this year—Henman has retired from the competition altogether—in order to save their bodies for grand slam and tour events.

Agassi advanced to the next round of the Nasdaq-100 Open, needing barely an hour and 12 aces to oust Arnaud Clement, 6-2, 6-4. Top-ranked Federer beat Argentine Mariano Zabaleta, 6-2, 5-7, 6-3. Taylor Dent defeated a top-10 player for the fourth time this year by eliminating Argentine Guillermo Coria, 6-3, 6-4.

Agassi said he has not spoken to the International Tennis Federation (ITF) about a change in the format and admitted that he has no suggestions as to how the competition should be restructured. *AP*

Houston's 'Rocket' ready fo

NEW YORK—Roger Clemens bounded to the mound for his first start in 10 days, then refused to come out after throwing 94 pitches. His hamstring healed, the Rocket looked ready for the regular season.

Reggie Sanders made his return to the St. Louis Cardinals' lineup from an appendectomy an emphatic one, too.

The 42-year-old Clemens seemed dominant as ever through the first four innings of the Houston Astros' 14-11, 10-inning victory over Detroit in Lakeland, Florida, on Monday, scattering four harmless hits. But the Tigers broke through for three runs in the fifth and four more in the sixth.

"The hamstring was free and loose," Clemens said. "I was able to jog to the mound, which I couldn't do the other day."

Clemens got a standing ovation from the fans at Joker Marchant Stadium as he left after completing six innings, trailing 7-6. He allowed 12 hits, two of them homers, while walking one and striking out seven.

This was the third start of the spring for Clemens, but the first since March 18, when he left a game against Detroit with a strained right hamstring. Clemens, who won his seventh Cy Young award last season, threw 90 pitches in a simulated game March 24 in Kissimmee.

Astros manager [illegible] tended to keep Clem[ens] count, but it didn't [matter] way.

"I went out to the [mound] said he wanted to k[now] said. "I frankly thou[ght] was his best."

Clemens eventual[ly] pitches, 70 for strikes.

At Jupiter, Florid[a], in the third inning o[f] 10 loss to the New Yo[rk] tions since being rem[oved] up March 17 because He had surgery the spent two days in the

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f his trademark dunks. AP

PLAYERS CHAMPIONSHIP

'Love Bug' Funk cashes biggest golf paycheck

PONTE VEDRA BEACH, Florida—At a tournament that rewarded patience as much as shotmaking, Fred Funk could not have been a more popular or deserving winner of The Players Championship on Monday.

One of the most gruelling weeks in PGA Tour history turned into a battle between the tortoise and the hares with Funk, a Ponte Vedra resident and fan favorite, crossing the finish line first after firing a final-round one-under-par 71, a stroke ahead of Americans compatriots Tom Lehman, Scott Verplank and Briton Luke Donald.

"Today was just a matter of huge patience," Funk told reporters after picking up the biggest win of his career and a winner's check of $1.44 million.

It hasn't sunk in, "but it's an awful good feeling.

"To come at this stage in my career and against this strong a field, and all these power guys. I felt kind of like Herbie the Volkswagen, The Love Bug, because I'm out there just hitting my little pea shooters, and the bombers are going 40 by me, everybody I was playing with."

The oldest winner of golf's unofficial fifth major, the 48-year-old Funk admitted he is an economy model in a field packed with Ferraris.

But the veteran got good mileage on the weather-battered TPC at Sawgrass Stadium course, staying out of trouble while golf's power-hitters were often penalized when they strayed from the narrow fairways into the treacherous rough.

"You can be long and crooked, but you can't be short and crooked," said Funk. "With the rough as thick as it was here this week and even last year and the year before that, it's always been thick, it's been a premium on hitting it in the fairway here.

"That's what you needed to do to score. I could still score on this golf course.

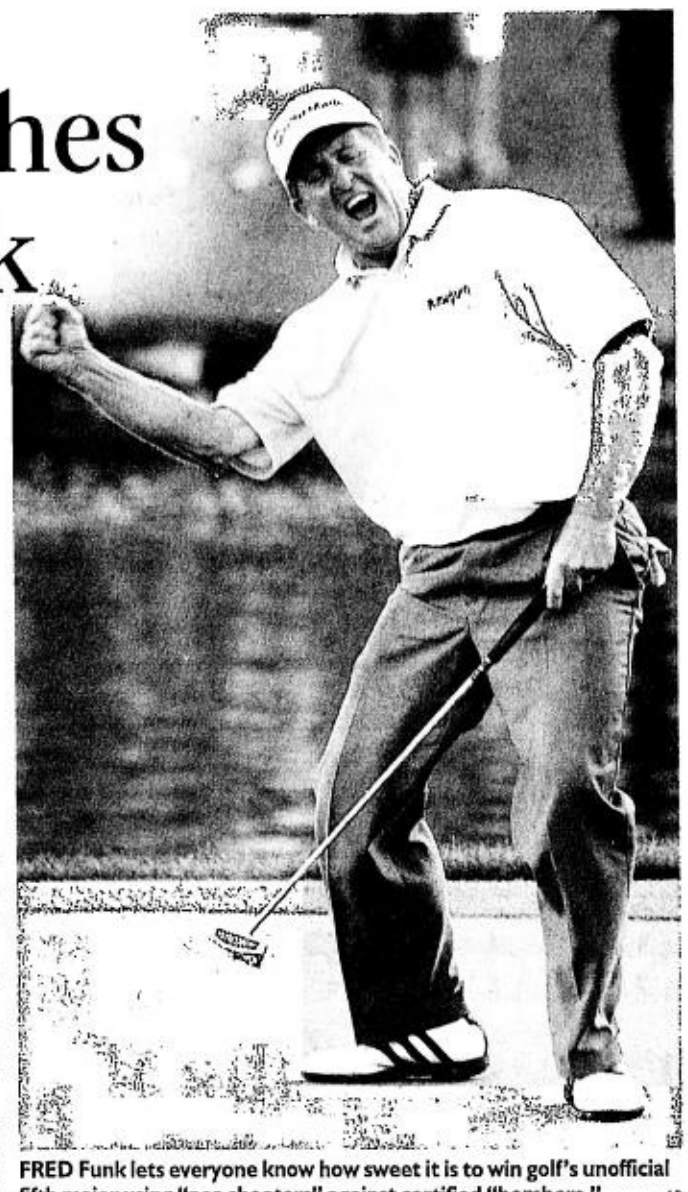
"It's a golf course that actually is pleasing to my eye when I stand on the hole. There's a couple of holes I'm a little uncomfortable out here with, but most of them I feel comfortable hitting the shot, and that means a lot."

After being pounded by thunderstorms for four days, torrential rains gave way to gusting winds on Monday placing an even greater premium on accuracy.

The difficult last-day conditions at Sawgrass resulted in 16 players ending up in the 80s for the final round and more than 20 balls being dumped in the water at the infamous par-three 17th with its treacherous island green.

Funk also faltered in the blustery winds coming home with bogeys on 14, 15 and 17 but held his nerve when it mattered most, draining a five-foot putt for par at the final hole to keep his one stroke advantage and maintain the pressure on those behind him.

"I can't comprehend how big this really is for me. But they can't take it away from me. I won this thing today and I always will cherish this win here." *Reuters*



FRED Funk lets everyone know how sweet it is to win golf's unofficial fifth major using "pea shooters" against certified "bombers." AP

Sawgrass' island green leaves its mark

PONTE VEDRA BEACH, Florida—Golf course architect Pete Dye would be proud. One of his most famous tests, the island green at TPC Sawgrass was living up to its dubious reputation at The Players Championship.

And no one felt its sting worse than Bob Tway, the former PGA champion who set the all-time record for futility, taking a 9-over 12 on the devilish 17th hole after dumping four balls in the water.

"You're playing great in the tournament and all of a sudden, in one hole, you might as well be finishing last," a somber Tway said on Monday.

His score erased the mark of Robert Gamez, who took an 11 on the hole during The Players Championship in 1990.

"I didn't think anybody would break it," Gamez said. "Eleven is a pretty big number.

Tway was tied for 10th stepping to the 17th tee on Monday morning and thought he struck a decent iron to the green, but a gust carried it into the water. At the drop area, 77 yards from the cup, things got worse.

Tway again went over the green. His next two shots came up short, and he finally hit the back side of the green, 40 feet away. He three-putted for a 12.

"I think I played the hole 4, 4, 6 and 12," he said. "I don't know what that adds up to, but I think that's quite a few."

After finishing at No. 18, Tway sat alone at the end of his golf bag, hands covering his face. Scott Verplank, one of Tway's good friends, patted his buddy to boost his spirits.

Tway was far from No. 17's only victim.

Phil Mickelson put two shots in the water during the third round for a quadruple bogey, then dumped another one in during the the final round for a double bogey.

Sergio Garcia went over the green on his first shot, then short after the drop to take a triple bogey.

Tiger Woods couldn't escape trouble either. His shoulders slumped as his ball sailed over the green for a saddening splash.

Woods loves the hole, he just wishes it weren't in such a critical location.

"I've always said, 17 is a great hole if it was No. 8, not No. 17," he said. "I don't think a hole like that should decide a tournament."

The wind was a major factor. Morning gusts blew to 35 mph (56 kph), keeping players guessing what clubs to choose.

Vijay Singh, a resident of Ponte Vedra Beach, was asked what he normally does in these conditions.

"When it's this breezy, we don't even go out, not even to the range," he said.

It wasn't so long ago, Dye says, when US PGA Tour pros hated his creation and the havoc it caused. Only recently, he said this week, have the players "not snarled as they go by."

Tway shrugs his shoulders. There's not much to say after a hole like that.

"It's a shame that it happens, that you play that well for that long," he said. "But everyone's got to play it." *AP*

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Thaworn's success, where he joined Thongchai as the only Thai winners on the European Tour, came in the same week when the Asian Tour was ratified as a full member of the International Federation of PGA Tours.

The timing of his win was perfect to reinforce the rapid rise in playing standards in Asia.

He accumulated a four-day total of 25-under-par 255, which was the lowest aggregate (not in relation to par) on the Asian Tour and European Tour.

Growing up next to the Army golf course in Bangkok and a two-minute walk from Thai legend Boonchu Ruangkit's home, Thaworn got hooked to the game after he started to caddie to earn a few extra Baht.

He developed a self-taught swing where his hands move directly above his head at the top of the backswing and has a long extended, much photographed, follow through.

Thaworn has often said that he did not see a need to remodel his swing, and after his fifth Asian Tour title and maiden European Tour triumph, there is definitely not a need for a rehaul.

"It has worked well for me during my amateur days and it works well now. I don't think I need to change." Victory in Jakarta came with a two-year exemption in Europe until the end of 2007. *AFP*

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championships in Montreal.

For Phelps, this week marks his new start.

"I think there's more excitement, not nervousness," he said. "This is my favorite part of swimming, competing."

During the past two years, few have been able to keep up with the nearly invincible Phelps.

He has smashed world records, earned medals like they were prizes in a cereal box, and dominated former Olympic medalists in their signature events. The wins came so frequently that his profile reached celebrity status, and he entered last summer's Olympics with the title of America's latest golden boy.

But in the seven months since becoming the first US swimmer to earn eight medals in a single Olympiad, Phelps has actually appeared human.

At October's World Short Course Championships in Indianapolis, Phelps withdrew on the second day because of a back injury. *AP*

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"I still feel a little weak but I expect to be at full strength opening day," Sanders said. As for the solo home run in the third inning, Sanders said with a smile, "It sure felt good."

Sanders, who hit .260 with 22 home runs and 67 RBIs with the Cardinals last season, said he started light workouts five days after having surgery.

Braves 12, Indians 6

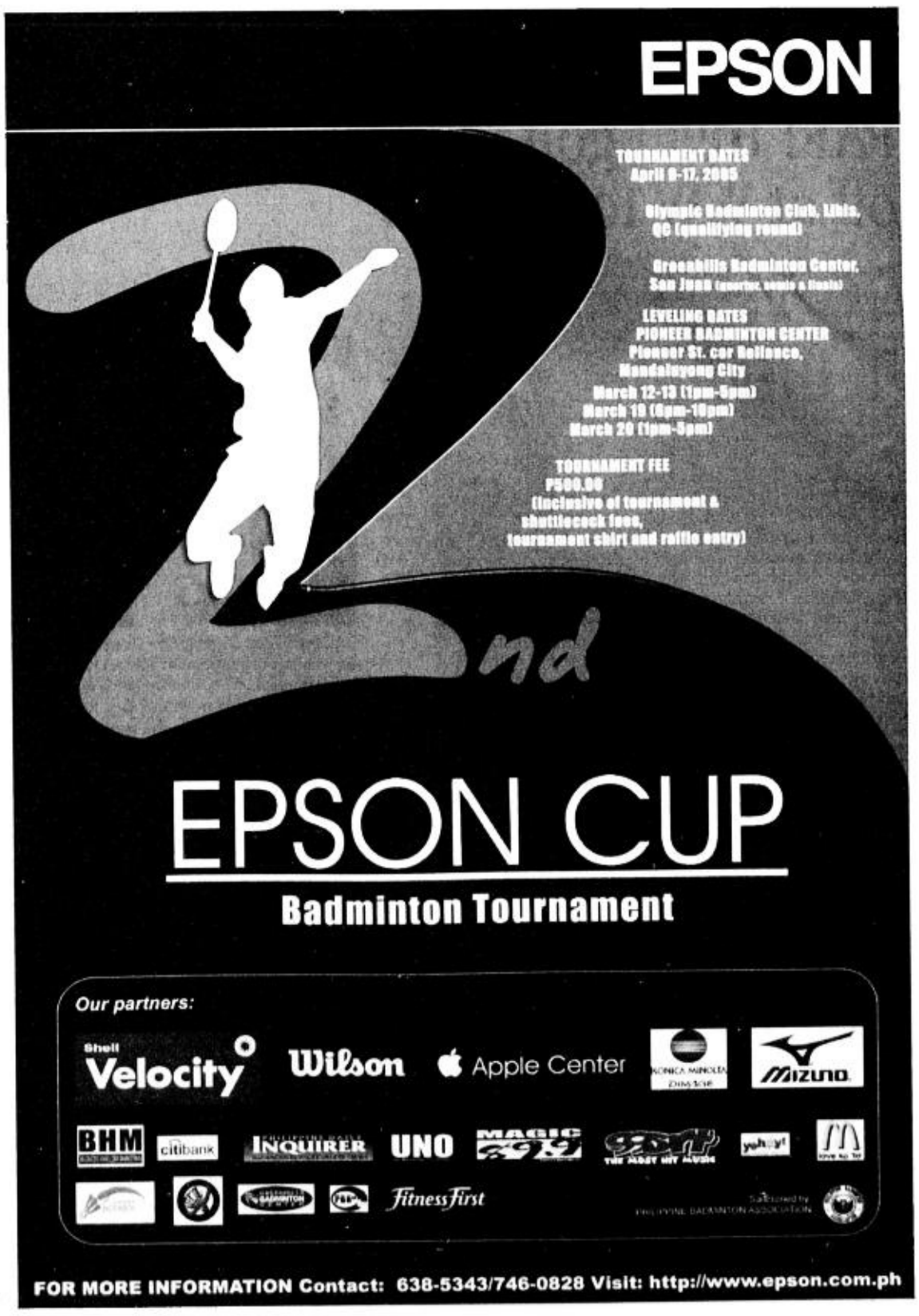
Meanwhile, in Winter Haven, Florida, using a batting stance Willie Mays urged him to go back to, Andruw Jones hit his major league-leading ninth and 10th home runs of the spring.

Cleveland's Juan Gonzalez, who made the opening day roster in his comeback from three injury-prone seasons, was a late scratch from the starting lineup with a tight left hamstring.

Yankees 8, Blue Jays 3

At Dunedin, Florida, Tony Womack was hit in the left knee by a pitch from David Bush. X-ray were negative and he'll have an MRI on Tuesday. Yankees manager Joe Torre is hopeful Womack will return this week.

Bernie Williams went 2-for-4, including an RBI triple, in his first major league game since straining his upper back March 20. *AP*



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JAYVIE Agojo's 49 points failed to lift her squad. PDI PHOTO

JUNGOLF CLUBS TILT

Southwoods-Masters, Riviera in solid starts

MANILA Southwoods grabbed the top two positions in Division I while Riviera staged an early breakaway in Division II at the start of the first Jungolf National Club Championships Monday, the opening leg of the Samsung Jungolf Tour.

National player Mike Bibat fired 52 points, Tonton Asistio contributed 50 and Regan de Guzman chipped in 48 as Southwoods-Masters posted 150 to open up a four-point lead over Southwoods-Legends in Division I play at Mt. Malarayat in Lipa City.

Mico Alejandro matched Bibat's two-over-par 74 effort worth 52 points for Southwoods-Legends, Nonoy Negrido added a 48 and Debbie de Villa submitted a 46.

RP Ladies Open champ Jayvie Agojo tallied a respectable 49 but the La Salle I team she was reinforcing trailed in fourth at 141 in the category featuring players in the special division, Class A and Class B.

Over at Camp Aguinaldo, Dottie Ardina and Maan Legaspi combined for 95 points as they powered Riviera to a commanding 18-point spread in Division II for kids in the Class C, Class D and Class E age bracket.

AR Ramos completed scoring with his 44 points in a rousing start for the Rivierans, who wound up with a 139 total for an 18-point lead over Aguinaldo I.

TJGL Team 1, getting 42 from Remo Fueg, was in third at 114 while Orchard, powered by the day-best 50 of Wolen Superal in his group, was fourth at 109.

Tournament sponsors are Samsung, Philippine Airlines, Unilever, Camp Aguinaldo and Mt. Malarayat.

The Superals actually led the individual scoring derby in both divisions as Crystal Superal upstaged Agojo in the girls' side.

Crystal, playing for Orchard, birdied the seventh and eighth holes for a two-under 34 at the turn en route to a one-over 73 for 53 points. She was five ahead of De Guzman and seven up on De Villa.

Agojo was alone on top in the special division, with Matet Salivio and Katrina Gonzalez tied for second at 43, while Korean Lee Seo-jae was far ahead in Class A with her 50-point effort.

The standings:

Division I: 150 SW-Masters, 146 SW-Legends, 144 Riviera I, 141 La Salle, 134 TJGL II, 133 Riviera II, 133 Ateneo I, 130 Orchard, 130 Aguinaldo, 125 TJGL I, 120 Valley, 116 Mt. Malarayat, 109 Sta. Elena, 94 La Salle II, 93 TJGL III, 92 Ateneo III

Division II: 139 Riviera I, 121 Aguinaldo I, 114 TJGL I, 109 Orchard I, 103 Riviera II, 87 Valley I, 79 La Salle I, 75 Aguinaldo 2, 70 TJGL III, 63 Riviera IV, 59 Riviera III, 53 TJGL II

Saudi friendship races highlight SLLP program

FOUR rich races banner Manila Jockey Club's 2005 Summer Racing Festival this weekend at the San Lazaro Park in Carmona, Cavite.

Saturday's featured race will be the Inter-Parliamentary Union Welcome Race in honor of delegates to the 112th Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) from 140 countries and seven associate members from around the world.

Aside from the P500,000 Philracom-sponsored IPU race, there will be six invitational races that will spice up the day's 12-race program.

The grand racing day on Sunday is dubbed the "Philippine-Saudi Arabian Friendship Day."

The highlight race is the "Crown Prince Abdullah Bin Abdulaziz Al Saud Cup" in honor of his Royal Highness Crown Prince Abdullah Bin Abdulaziz Al Saud of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia which will feature the country's top 3-year-old runners.

Among the rated entries are Chairman's Cup winner Speed Majesty (LD Balboa) and stablemate Speed Advantage (FM Raquel Jr.) from the Yutadco stable, Real Spicy (PR Dilema) and War Alert (MF Daquis) from the Esguerra Stable, Full of Fury (JT Zarate), Vivere (EF Salvador) and Thywillbedone (ES Aguila).

Another major race is the President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo Cup which will feature another duel between arch rival Cover Girl (JB Hernandez) and Empire King (JM Ladiana).

Other runners in the hunt for the top prize include Freewind (FM Raquel Jr.) Good Landing (DH Borbe Jr.), Last Snip (JB Guce) and West Bound (EF Salvador).

Both races are sponsored by Petron and Saudi Arabian Airlines.

Saudi Arabian Ambassador Mohammed Ameen Wali said Crown Prince Al Saud had approved the staging of the Al Saud Cup to strengthen the friendship and cooperation between Saudi Arabia and the Philippines.

EXPECT a lot of action as the top collegiate stars of beach volleyball gather anew for another edition of the annual Nestea tournament.

Nestea Beach Volley starts Friday

SEVENTY-TWO teams from 44 colleges and universities nationwide are set to compete for beach volley supremacy when the elimination round of the 9th Nestea Beach Volley championship gets underway at La Salle Greenhills this weekend.

The schedule for the Luzon elimination is from April 1 to 3 while the Visayas and Mindanao elimination rounds are set from April 5 to 7. Winners will earn the right to compete in the semifinal and championship rounds to be held in Boracay from May 5 to 7.

Up for grabs is over half a million pesos in prizes and other perks.

The champion teams get P100,000 each and P50,000 worth of sports equipment for the school they represent.

Luzon representatives include Adamson, Ateneo, College of St. Benilde, De La Salle, Far Eastern U, Letran, Lyceum, Pampanga Agricultural College, PATTS College of Aeronautics, Philippine Christian University, St. Francis of Assisi College, St. Jude College and St. Louis University

Also from Luzon are San Sebastian College-Cavite, University of Asia and the Pacific, University of Baguio, University of the Cordilleras, University of Perpetual Help System Laguna, University of the Philippines-Diliman and UP-Los Baños.

Visayas will be represented by defending men's champion University of San Jose-Recoletos, defending women's champion Southwestern University, Colegio de la Purisima Concepcion, Foundation University, Iloilo Doctors College, St. Paul Business School, University of Cebu, University of Iloilo, University of Negros Occidental-Recoletos, University of San Agustin, University of San Carlos, University of St. La Salle, University of Southern Philippines and University of Visayas.

Mindanao teams include Ateneo de Davao, Davao Doctors College, Holy Cross of Davao, Mahardika Institute of Technology, Mindanao State University and Misamis University.

PASI Invt'l golf fires off at WW tomorrow

GOLFERS from the retail industry troop to the Wack Wack west course tomorrow for the first Philippine Association of Supermarkets Inc. (PASI) Invitational tournament. Tee-off time is 7 a.m.

More than 40 teams of four players each are expected to play for team and individual prizes at stake in the 18-hole tourney backed by San Miguel Corp., Coca-Cola Bottlers Inc. and Nestlé Phils. as presenters and Purefoods Hormel as major sponsor.

Exclusive sponsors are Nestlé Phils. Ice Cream Division, Unilever RFM Ice Cream, Sara Lee Phils., New Zealand Milk Phils., Unilever Phils. Inc., McKenzie Distribution and Magnolia. Other sponsors are SC Johnson & Son, New Zealand Milk Phils., Marina Sales, Gardenia Phils., Link Import-Export Enterprises, Del Monte Phils., Body Needs & Basic Corp., Wyeth Phils. Inc. and Grandour Phils.

The tournament jackpot is a 25-inch JVC color TV with DVD player and TV rack that goes to the first player to score a hole-in-one.

Organizing committee head Rene Guevarra said there will be four handicap classes to be disputed in individual play.

The top one-third of the field will comprise Class A, the next one-third will be in Class B and the final one-third in Class C. The fourth division will be the Open class for those without handicap indexes.

Trophies and items will be given to the overall low net, overall low gross and the top two finishers in each division. For inquiries, call Ruth Reyes at 3628349.

BADMINTON CHAMP: De La Salle University topped the collegiate team event during the 1st eTelecare Collegiate and Alumni Invitational Badminton Cup 2005 held at the PowerSmash Badminton Courts in Makati City. Rod Estrera and Erroll Chan handed out the trophies and medals to members of the DLSU team.

MANDAUE WARS

Bauya turns back Galicia; Gejon scores

By Salven L. Lagumbay
Contributor

MANDAUE CITY—Philippine bantamweight champion Joel Bauya and minimumweight titlist Elmer Gejon retained their respective titles in contrasting fashions against worthy foes in the "War at the Gallera" card held Monday evening at the New Gallera De Mandaue.

The Iligan City-raised Bauya, fighting out of the Emil Romano Stable, stalked the much taller Roger Galicia all night long and kept his crown by majority draw.

Gejon was a clear winner by unanimous decision over challenger Carlo Besares in a fight that saw both boxers finish with blood dripping from head wounds following two accidental headbutts.

Bauya won after judges Ben Necesario and Jonathan Davis declared his fight with Galicia even at 114-114. The third judge, Dioscoro Ramirez, had Galicia the winner by a 118-114 score.

The judges who favored Gejon scored it 114-113, 114-112 and 117-112.

In the night's most applauded encounter, Apol Suico of Wakee Salud Stable came back from a first-round knockdown by Manny Pacquoan, returned the compliment in the second round and then dominated from there for a unanimous decision win.

The Stonewall fighter Pacquoan, who fights like Filipino ring idol Manny Pacquiao, used a right cross in the dying seconds of the opening round to deck Suico, only to suffer the same fate after a series of Suico shots in the ensuing round.

In other bouts all decided by unanimous decisions, JR Sollano beat comebacking Ricky Gozo; Alex Aroy whipped Michael Rodriguez, and Charles Delada outclassed Gerry Lota.

Young RP triathletes post 1-2 finish

YOUNG triathletes Lea Coline Langit and Mimi Lucas finished 1-2 for the Philippine team in the Uni-President Triathlon Championship in Tainan, Chinese-Taipei, recently.

Langit, an 18-year-old freshman at De La Salle University, wound up second to Hong Kong's Christine Bailey in the women's event despite leading the field after the 1.5-K swim leg.

Bailey took the lead in the 40-K bike leg and poured it on in the final 10-K run to finish with a time of 2:14 hours, 1:35 minutes ahead of Langit who was competing in her first international race.

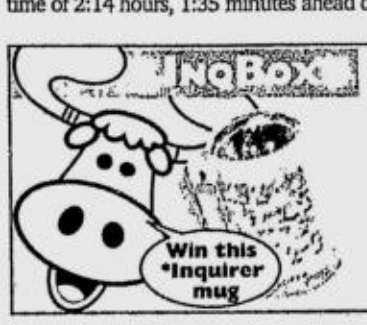
The 15-year-old Lucas recorded a personal-best like Langit as she ended up third in 2:26.

A third RP team member, 17-year-old Mikki Quilala, finished 11th overall against older and more experienced triathletes from Singapore, Hong Kong, Macau and Chinese-Taipei.

The men's event was won by Hong Kong bet Andrew Wright in 1:58:19, with Japanese veteran Endo Kenta coming in second in 1:58:33 and Hong Kong's KC Lao third in 2:02.26.

"All three (Langit, Lucas and Quilala) performed well and improved their times," reported national head coach Abet Alonalon.

Triathlon Association of the Philippines president Tom Carrasco said the strong showing of the teenaged triathletes, whose training was backed by Diner's Club, augurs well for the country's chances in the Southeast Asian Games in November. Triathlon also counts on the support of Speedo, PowerBar, Asian Centre for Insulation, David's Salon, Stronghold Insurance and Reliv.

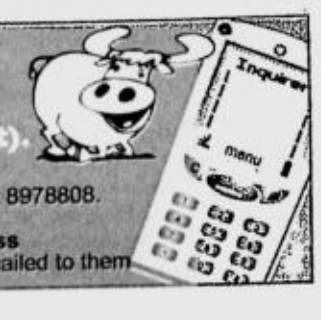


Question of the Week

Do you believe the 4-day workweek program of the government will result in savings in electricity and fuel consumption?

Senders of d best 20 texts as publishd in Tuesday's INQBOX *wil each receiv an "Inquirer Mug! (i)*

Key in: **inquirer box name/age/city/message.**
Text your answers to 2207 (Globe) or 283 (Smart).
(Maximum of 160 characters)



*Metro Manila winners can call Jane at 8978808.
Provincial winners can text:
inquirer ad name/city/mailing address
to 2207 or 283 as their prizes will be mailed to them

Peña poses threat to Formula 3 bets

IF foreign drivers don't watch out, a homegrown kid may just steal the show in the opening two legs of the 2005 Asian Formula 3 Grand Prix on April 9-10 at the Batangas Racing Circuit.

AF3 Corp. chair Ed Peña, guesting in yesterday's PSA Forum at the Manila Pavilion, revealed that in recent practice runs at the BRC track, his son, Dado, and Indon star Ananda Mikola clocked nearly identical times, raising the possibility that a Filipino may pull the rug from under the foreign-dominated field vying in the opener of the 12-leg series.

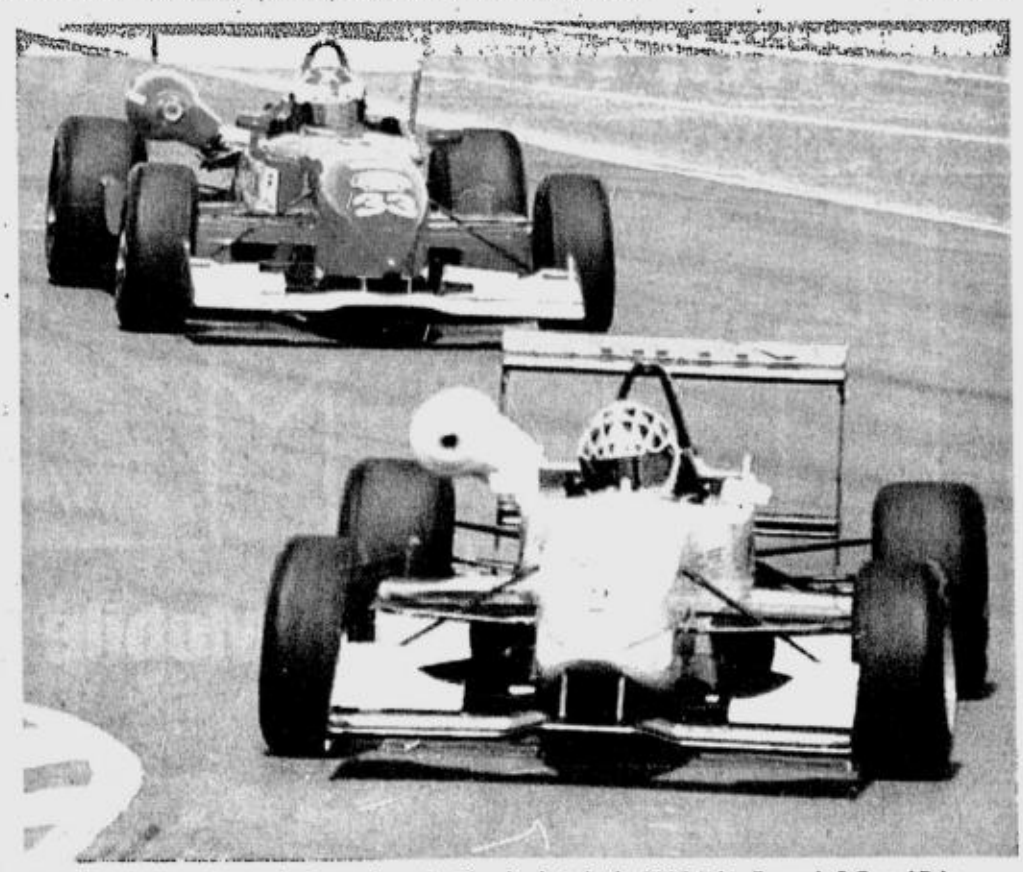
Mikola, 26, who dominated the Indon leg of the series last year, negotiated the 3.4-kilometer track in 23.29 seconds while Dado, 17, now competing against the big boys in the overall class, clocked 23.31 seconds, according to Peña.

"Anything can happen in the opening legs. Ananda and Dado did well in recent practice runs but they are up against a tough field," said Peña, who was accompanied to the Forum by 2003 overall champion Pepon Marave of the Philippines, last year's overall runner-up John O'Hara of Ireland and Briton Mark Goddard, owner of Team Goddard that is bidding to keep the overall crown in the Team Championship of the series sponsored by Addict Mobile, Motolite Battery, Boysen, Yokohama Tires, Lima City Hotel and PLDT MyTad.

O'Hara, now driving for the Fujitsu-Ten Toyota Team Tom's, agreed with Peña, saying this year's series "will no longer be a two-horse race." O'Hara figured in a tight race for the overall crown last year with Christian Jones, an Australian competing in the series using a Filipino driver's license, who eventually triumphed.

"I made a good account of myself last year. I think will challenge again this year, but it will no longer be between me and Christian. There are a lot of good drivers out there, like Ananda, Dado and Pepon," said O'Hara, 24, the personal choice of the Japanese owner of Toyota Team Tom's to be the squad's lead driver this year.

Marave, back on the driver's seat after concentrating on managing his Shell Helix Kinetic PCSO team, predicted that his team will emerge champion this year.



FILIPINO drivers will test their mettle against foreign bets in the 2005 Asian Formula 3 Grand Prix.

SPORTSWATCH

Cebuana Lhuillier joins NBC tourney

THE RP-CEBUANA Lhuillier team will join the National Basketball Conference's final pre-season series in the north from April 5 to 10. The nationals, who are preparing for the 2005 Southeast Asian Games here, will figure in a round-robin series with the Laguna Spring of NBC president Nathaniel "Tac" Padilla and Gov. Teresita "Ningning" Lazaro, Mayor Freddie Tinga's Forward Taguig and expansion team Parañaque Jets of Vice Mayor and actor-TV host Anjo Yllana. RP-Cebuana Lhuillier's participation in the event was finalized recently after assistant team manager Danny Francisco and head coach Boysie Zamar met with NBC secretary general Tito Palma.

Chancellor's Cup table tennis tilt

MORE than 500 participants are expected to compete in the seventh UP Chancellor's Cup National Open Table Tennis Invitational Tournament from April 5 to 9 at the UP Kinetic gym in Diliman, Quezon City. The event is led by UAAP Champion UST, FEU, DLSU, Adamson, Ateneo de Manila, Baguio, Navy, Air Force, Rancho Villa, national team and other schools and clubs. Last year's champions College of St. Benilde (women team open), Letran (women team non-rank), Bossini team (men's non-rank) and DOT PH (men's open) are ready to defend their titles.

SBC lawyers' golfest set at Riviera

THE SAN Beda Law Golf Club Inc. will hold its March tournament on the 31st at the Riviera Golf and Country Club in Silang, Cavite. Tee-off time is at 10 a.m. to noon, according to its president lawyer Plaridel J. Bohol II. The tournament will continue to raise funds for the San Beda Legal Aid clinic. Registration starts at 9 a.m.

World Paralympic champ holds clinic

SIX-TIME Seoul World Paralympic Games gold medalist and European handcycling champion Errol Marklein will be here today and tomorrow to conduct clinics on wheelchair racing, basketball and handcycling. The event will be held in cooperation with the Philippine Asean Paragames Organizing Committee and Philippine Sports Association for the Differently Abled. Participants of the 7th Philippine Wheelchair Basketball League will attend Marklein's clinic at the PSC-Philsports.

Conquer Iligan Eco-Adventure Race

ILIGAN City Mayor Lawrence Cruz bared yesterday the staging of the "Conquer Iligan Eco-Adventure Race 2005" on April 4-6. Patterned after the popular "Outdoor Quest," the race will include trail running sections, rubber tubing, mountain biking, trekking, swimming, paddling, navigation, rope sections and other surprises. For three days, teams of three racers each with at least one member of the opposite sex will see action. The teams will have different start and finish points, different disciplines and different adventures daily. Registration fee is P2,000 inclusive of post-race dinner, souvenir shirt, race kit and equipment rental.

Family fun day at La Mesa Ecopark

A FAMILY fun day consisting of sports activities—fun race, swimming at the salt water pool, boating at the lagoon, tug-of-war, and adventure games and challenges—will be held at the La Mesa Ecopark in Quezon City on April 10. The TREEathlon sponsored by HSBC will be held from 5 a.m. to 9 a.m. Call ABS-CBN Foundation's Bantay Kalikasan program at 415-2227 or 410-9670 for details.

2-day motocross unfolds

THE SECOND Invitational Endurocross kicks off April 2 and 3 at the Sta. Lucia's Palo Alto Racetrack in Baras, Rizal. Six motocross categories are slated in the event, according to Nani Pazcoguin of the organizing KP5. Interested parties may contact 0915-4026625 or 0918-3715543. The event is sponsored by Sta. Lucia, Norkis Yamaha, Shell Advance, Caltex Revtex, Country Waffles, ITTI-Caterpillar, Otto shoes, Aqua Soft, Reyes Haircutters, Access Plus, EL Racing Tech, GCG Pipe, Oakley, Fox, JMS, JBS, YRS, Dan's bike shop, Mocha Blends, Molecules, Miyata Karaoke, Auto Klasse, East Cars and Triplex.

Manny joins NCA 5-cock derby

BOXING hero Manny Pacquiao enters another *rueda* on April 1 when he competes in the NCA 5-Cock Derby at the air-conditioned Pasay City Cockpit. The event will be sponsored by Sagupaan Complexor 3000. Pacquiao, who owns a gamefarm with more than 500 fighting cocks in General Santos City, will field Lemon Roundheads and Butcher Hatch. Pacquiao confirmed his participation in a conversation with Patrick Antonio who heads the sponsoring NCA Group. In fact, Pacquiao will field two entries. According to PCC pit managers Eric dela Rosa and Butchoy Olano, this will be the second time Pacquiao will join a Pasay derby. Submission of entries will be tomorrow, from 2 p.m. to 9 p.m. Call 8431890, 8431746 and 8166750 for details.

Filcobra lines up 56 fights today

ANOTHER big crowd is expected today at Roligon Mega Cockpit as the Filipino Cockers and Breeders Association (Filcobra) 4-Cock Derby gets going at 7 p.m. with more than 56 fights lined up. Among the favorites is the Wild Na Wild entry of Philip Chiongbian and Edmund Yasay, current leaders in the Filcobra Cocker of the Year race with 16 points. Chiongbian and Yasay will again field the imported Johnny Jumper lemons. For inquiries, contact 8332275, 8331638 and 8529812.

Pacquiao free boxing clinics up

By Tina G. Santos

BOXING idol Manny Pacquiao yesterday vowed to help the Manila City government in conducting free clinics for aspiring local boxers in a bid to produce a stable of future champs.

The local government yesterday opened its doors and rolled out the red carpet to give a hero's welcome to Pacquiao, who showed the world the Filipinos' never-say-die spirit despite losing to Mexican Eric Morales in Las Vegas recently.

Confetti rained as Pacquiao, considered an adopted son of Manila, arrived at the city hall and was greeted by hundreds of cheering employees.

Pacquiao said he accepted Mayor Lito Atienza's invitation to assist in the city's program as a gesture of gratitude to Manila, where he started and spent his training years at a gym in Sampaloc.

Atienza ordered Manila Sports Council chair Ali Atienza to coordinate with Pacquiao's camp in scheduling free clinics and training in the city's redeveloped sports facilities.

"We are very fortunate to have him (Pacquiao) in our program. With his combined talent and experiences plus good sportsmanship, we are sure to develop well-rounded athletes," the mayor said.

Pacquiao said that if his schedule permits, he would give training to young boxers at least twice a week.

"I would like to serve as an inspiration to others and, at the same time, encourage people, especially the youth to engage in sports. It is also a way to help them stay away from vices and instill in them values like sportsmanship and discipline," Pacquiao said in Filipino.

Mayor Atienza expressed confidence that Pacquiao would win more fights and bring more honor to the country.

Splash Island hosts swim, tennis camps

THE FIL-ESTATE Sports Foundation Inc. (Fesfi) summer swimming and tennis camps at the Manila Southwoods Sports Club in Carmona, Cavite, have found a new friend: Splash Island.

Splash Island, the country's biggest water park located at the Southwoods Ecocentrum in Biñan, Laguna, has agreed to fully support the Fesfi summer swimming and tennis camps starting April 2.

Helm Public Affairs Inc. president Jaime V. Borromeo said Splash Island welcomes the opportunity to support the country's sports development program through the Fesfi summer swimming and tennis camps.

"We're very happy for this opportunity to be a part of this Fesfi summer swimming and tennis camps, which are aimed at producing outstanding athletes who will someday represent the country in international competitions," said Borromeo.

This was the second straight year that Splash Island is lending a helping hand to the summer swimming and tennis camps.

Fesfi has again tapped the services of Melbourne Olympian Gertrudes "Tuding" Lozada and former RP David Cup team captain Manny Tecson to handle the swimming and tennis camps.

Lozada will hold a two-part swimming clinic at the Manila Southwoods from April 3 to May 22 (Sundays only), while Tecson will conduct tennis classes at the Manila Southwoods Sports Club from April 2-24 and May 7-29. For inquiries, call Jerry Tripulca at 0917-8981516 or Manny Tecson at 9389522 or 9394851.

ROTARIANS celebrate their RCPN Club team victory of the 11th annual RI-D3830 Fishing Fiesta held recently at the 888 Fishing Place in Kawit, Cavite, (inset) beating 38 anglers of Rotary International D3830.

RCPN anglers rule fun fishing tourney

ROTARY Club of Parañaque North (RCPN), composed of Fred Batungbacal, Bel Hizon, Star Amistoso, Graciela Protacio and Gia Protacio, bagged the championship club team trophy in the 11th annual RI-D3830 fun fishing and fellowship held recently at the 888 Fishing Place in Kawit, Cavite.

Host-organizer RCPN president Ver Hizon said the team caught 75 milkfish weighing 30.05 kg. RC Parañaque West PP Fred Batungbacal won the Rotarian champion trophy while RCPN PP Eggie Protacio's daughter Graciela took the junior champion trophy with her 25 *bangus* at 10.9 kg. (See details at uwinwin.biz/rcpn or the winners' list at uwinwin.biz/rcpn/winners.

Rotary Club of Makati Central (RCMC) emerged first runner-up with Arthur Menor, Deo Menor, Danilo Briones, Israel Fernandez and Lito Acaba.

Second runner-up trophy went to Rotary Club of Lucena composed of Rene Virtucio, Delia Capistrano, Mario Capistrano and Doddee Hermogeno.

Marathon opens Global City sports festival

THOUSANDS of runners are expected to compete in the Bonifacio Global City Marathon on April 17.

The event will kick off the Bonifacio Global City's six-week Summer Festival, which will include many events for individuals as well as families every weekend from mid-April up to the end of May.

Mountain biking races and clinics, paintball challenge, and an ultimate frisbee competition will also be held. Other events include drive-in movies on Fridays and kite flying every Saturday and Sunday.

The marathon starts at 5.30 a.m. at a location close to Bonifacio Stopover (where Jollibee and Shell gas station are located).

Runners between ages 6 and 12 years old may join the 3K race. Call 727-9987 for the marathon event, 049-541-1396 for mountain biking; and 564-4100 for the paintball challenge.

Softbelles summer course April 14

THE SOFTBELLES Summer Camp 2005 will start on April 14 and will last up to May 14 at the Rosario Sports Arena in Pasig City.

It is open to girls, ages 8 to 18 years old, who are interested in learning softball.

The Softbelles roster of coaches includes SEA Games veterans and mentors of four-peat UAAP champion University of the Philippines.

A three-day tournament will cap the 6-week, 15-session summer camp.

Registration forms are available at Mail and More outlets in Robinsons Galleria, Katipunan, SM Megamall and Festival Mall Alabang and at the following Airfreight 2100/FedEx World Service Center outlets: Robinsons Galleria, SM Megamall, North Edsa, Park Square, Fairview, Alabang Town Center and Festival Mall, Alabang.

For inquiries, call 7932121 or text 0917-7545242 or log on to the Softbelles website www.softbelles.org or e-mail home@softbelles.org.

The event is endorsed by the Amateur Softball Association of the Philippines and the Philippine Sports Commission.

RACING TIPS

AT SLLP BY MR. 999

Race 1--1. Sweet Inspiration 2. Trader's Choice 3. Mini Skirt 4. Raise D Sun

Race 2--1. Something Silver/Jonny Lou 2. Blue Bolero 3. Samahan 4. Lady Be Gold

Race 3--1. Boy from Brazil 2. Fly Aday Fly 3. Caballero 4. Astimegoesby/Going Strike

Race 4--1. Fantasia/Kambal 2. Kusang Loob 3. Witch Craft 4. La Española

Race 5--1. Playing Cool 2. All Powerful 3. She Boom 4. Galaxy Wars 5. Mr. Speaker

Race 6--1. Holy King 2. Top Quest 3. Golden Harry 4. Lucky Beat

Race 7--1. Royal Rose 2. Big Bucks 3. Rebound 4. Tiedil Forever

Race 8--1. Fille D'Honneur 2. Audrey's Temper 3. Dashing 4. Silent Wind 5. Hello Junior 6. Sa Wakas

INQBOX

Question of the Week

What are your Easter wishes for our country and people?

Senders of d best 20 texts as publishd in Tuesday's INQBOX *wil each receiv an "Inquirer Mug! Ü*

Win this *Inquirer mug

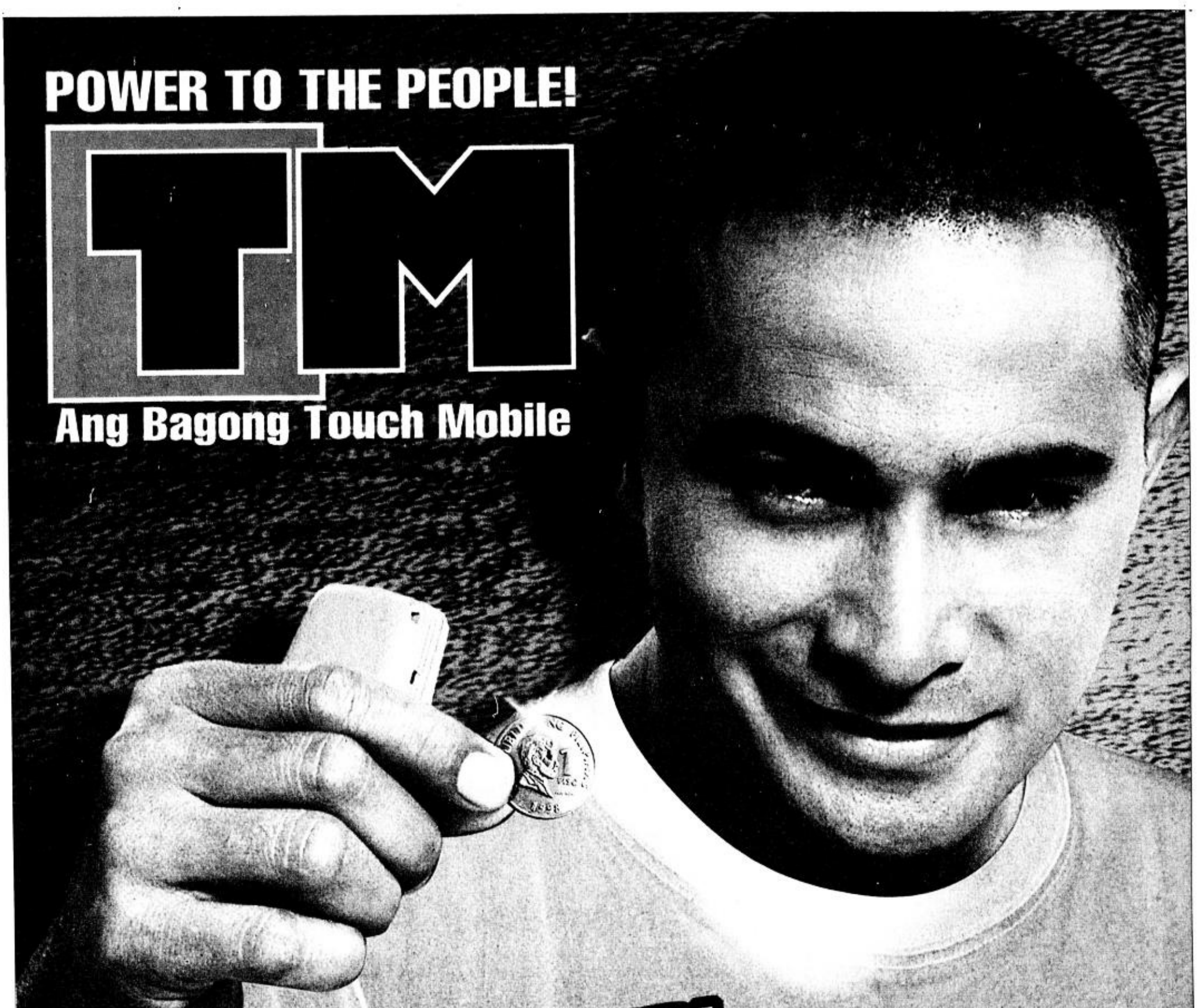
Key in: inquirer box name/age/city/message.
Text your answers to 2207 (Globe) or 283 (Smart).
(Maximum of 160 characters)

*Metro Manila winners can call Jane at 8978808.
Provincial winners can text:
inquirer ad name/city/mailing address
to 2207 or 283 as their prizes will be mailed to them

POWER TO THE PEOPLE!

TM

Ang Bagong Touch Mobile



TODO na ang POWER!

TODO TEXT

₱50 for 5 days

TM to TM todo texting.

Todo-tipid ito! ₱10/day lang!

TODO TAWAG TEXT

₱300 for 30 days

TM to TM todo calling & texting.

At ngayon meron ding TODO TAWAG TEXT ₱150 for 15 days

TODO TEXT Mechanics :

- Kailangan mag-register ang mga TM subscribers mula March 08 hanggang April 07, 2005 para maka-**TM Todo Text**. **I-text TM<space>50 at i-send sa 2824**. Registration is FREE.
- Agad-agad na mababawasan ng P50 service fee ang inyong load, tapos pwede nang mag-**TM Todo Text** within 24 hours.
- Kailangan ng P51 minimum account balance bago mag-register para sa **TM Todo Text**.
- Hindi magbabago ang expiry date ng load ninyo kapag nag-register sa **TM Todo Text**.
- Siguraduhing lampas 5 days ang expiry date ng load ninyo para tuluy-tuloy ang **TM Todo Text**.
- Kapag registered na kayo, pwede nang mag-text TM to TM kahit gaano karaming beses sa loob ng 5 days.
- Makakatanggap kayo ng activation notice within 24 hours ng inyong pag-register.
- Dapat laging may P1.00 minimum balance sa inyong account para patuloy ang **TM Todo Text**.
- Para malaman kung ilang araw na lang ang natitira sa inyong **TM Todo Text**, text TM<space>CHECK at i-send sa 2824. P1.00 per text.
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- Pati mga SIM-Swappers, pwedeng sumali sa **TM Todo Text**!

TODO TAWAG TEXT Mechanics:

- Kailangan mag-register ang mga TM subscribers mula March 08 hanggang April 07, 2005 para maka-**TM Todo Tawag Text**. **Text TM<space>150** or **TM<space>300 at i-send sa 2824**. Registration is FREE.
- Agad-agad mababawasan ng P150 service fee or P300 service fee ang inyong load para maka-**TM Todo Tawag Text** sa loob ng 15 days or 30 days.
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- Siguraduhin ding lampas 15 days or 30 days ang expiry date ng load ninyo para tuluy-tuloy ang **TM Todo Tawag Text**. Hindi magbabago ang expiry date ng load ninyo kapag nag-register sa **TM Todo Tawag Text**.
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- Makakatanggap kayo ng activation notice within 24 hours ng inyong pag-register.
- Dapat laging may P1.00 minimum balance sa inyong account para patuloy ang **TM Todo Tawag Text**.
- Para malaman kung ilan araw na lang ang natitira sa inyong **TM Todo Tawag Text**, text TM<space>CHECK at i-send sa 2824. P1.00 per text.
- Pagkatapos ng 15 days or 30 days, mag-register ulit para panibagong 15 days or 30 days na naman ang **TM Todo Tawag Text** ninyo! O kaya'y pwede namang mag-register sa **TM Todo Tawag Text**!
- Pati mga SIM –Swappers, pwedeng sumali sa **TM Todo Tawag Text**!

Napakadaling gamitin! 'Di na kailangan ng special call cards!

Text TM<space>HELP sa 2824. (P1/text)

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PER DTI-NCR PERMIT NO. 1159, SERIES OF 2005.

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ENTERTAINMENT

Editor Emmie G. Velarde

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OPENING TODAY

Be Cool

Directed by F. Gary Gray
Stars John Travolta, Uma Thurman, The Rock, Christina Milian, Vince Vaughn, Danny DeVito

PLOT summary: The continuing adventures of Chili Palmer (Travolta), debt collector-turned-Hollywood movie producer-turned-promoter of a struggling singer pursued by the Russian Mafia. No, this does not reveal why Mario Vazquez quit "American Idol."

Eleanor Ringel Gillespie, in her review for the The Atlanta Journal-Constitution: "'Be Cool' isn't. A junk-bond sequel to 1995's buoyant and smart 'Get Shorty,' this stunningly inept movie is an early contender for Worst Film of 2005 . . . 'Shorty' was directed by Barry Sonnenfeld, and 'Be Cool's' F. Gary Gray ('The Italian Job') is no Sonnenfeld. (Actually, Sonnenfeld has been no Sonnenfeld recently.) While the former captured the colorful characters and slimy cellphony vibe of Hollywood dealmaking evoked in Elmore Leonard's novel, Gray delivers a picture that's all over the place. You start to wonder if his movie is really this bad or if it's meant to be a pitch-perfect parody of other bad Hollywood movies."

The Pacifier

Directed by Adam Shankman
Stars Vin Diesel, Lauren Graham, Brittany Snow, Faith Ford, Carol Kane

PLOT Summary: Navy SEAL Shane Wolfe (Diesel) thought he was prepared to take on any duty no matter how perilous or impossible... until he tried baby-sitting. Assigned to protect the five out-of-control children of an assassinated scientist working on vital government secrets, Shane is suddenly faced with juggling two outrageously incompatible jobs—fighting the bad guys while keeping house.

OPENING/ A2-2

Guess who's tops in US?

LOS ANGELES—The Bernie Mac and Ashton Kutcher comedy "Guess Who," an update to the 1967 classic "Guess Who's Coming to Dinner," debuted at No. 1 with $21 million, according to weekend studio estimates.

Sandra Bullock's sequel, "Miss Congeniality 2: Armed and Fabulous," opened in second place with $14.5 million for Friday to Sunday. That brought the movie's total to $17.6 million since it opened Thursday to get a head start on Easter weekend.

The previous weekend's top flick, "The Ring 2" ("Samara" in the Philippines), slipped to third with $13.8 million, lifting its 10-day total to $58 million.

Unremarkable

It was a solid but unremarkable Easter weekend, generally a slow time at theaters because families are preoccupied with holiday gatherings. The top 12 movies took in $90.1 million, off 7 percent from Easter weekend last year, when "The Passion of the Christ" was No. 1.

"Guess Who" stars Mac as a black father who learns his daughter's boyfriend, Kutcher, is white. It is a reversal of the scenario of "Guess Who's Coming to Dinner," which starred Spencer Tracy, Katharine Hepburn and Sidney Poitier in the story about a white woman engaged to a black man.

While the original was heavy on social commentary amid the civil-rights movement, "Guess Who" plays the interracial romance angle for slapstick laughs.

"'Guess Who's Coming to Dinner' is the inspiration, but this is very broad comedy that plays really well in kind of the buddy mode as well as the romantic comedy mode," said Rory Bruer, head of distribution for Sony, which released "Guess Who."

In "Miss Congeniality 2," Bullock returns to her role as a tomboy FBI agent who gets a fashion makeover. This time, she is teamed with a surly partner, Regina King, to track down a kidnapped beauty queen.

The sequel had a better opening weekend than the original, which debuted with just over $10 million on Christmas weekend 2000, then hung on through word of mouth to become a $100 million hit.

Woody Allen's comedy-drama hybrid "Melinda and Melinda" had a strong expansion from its debut at one New York City theater the previous weekend. The film, which stars Radha Mitchell in dual roles, widened to 95 theaters in 12 cities and took in $790,000.

"The Ballad of Jack and Rose," starring Daniel Day-Lewis, debuted well in limited release, taking in $60,461 in four theaters. Written and directed by Rebecca Miller, Day-Lewis' wife and the daughter of playwright Arthur Miller, the film centers on the relationship between a dying environmental idealist and his troubled teenage daughter.

The blood-soaked South Korean vengeance thriller "Oldboy" debuted solidly in limited release with $75,000 in five theaters.

Estimated ticket sales for Friday through Sunday at North American theaters, according to Exhibitor Relations:

1) "Guess Who," $21 million
2) "Miss Congeniality 2: Armed and Fabulous," $14.5 million
3) "The Ring 2," $13.8 million
4) "Robots," $13 million
5) "The Pacifier," $8.5 million
6) "Hitch," $4.3 million
7) "Hostage," $4.1 million
8) "Ice Princess," $3.7 million
9) "Be Cool," $2.85 million
10) "Million Dollar Baby," $2.6 million

AP

ASHTON Kutcher in "Guess Who"

Oyo Boy, not Richard

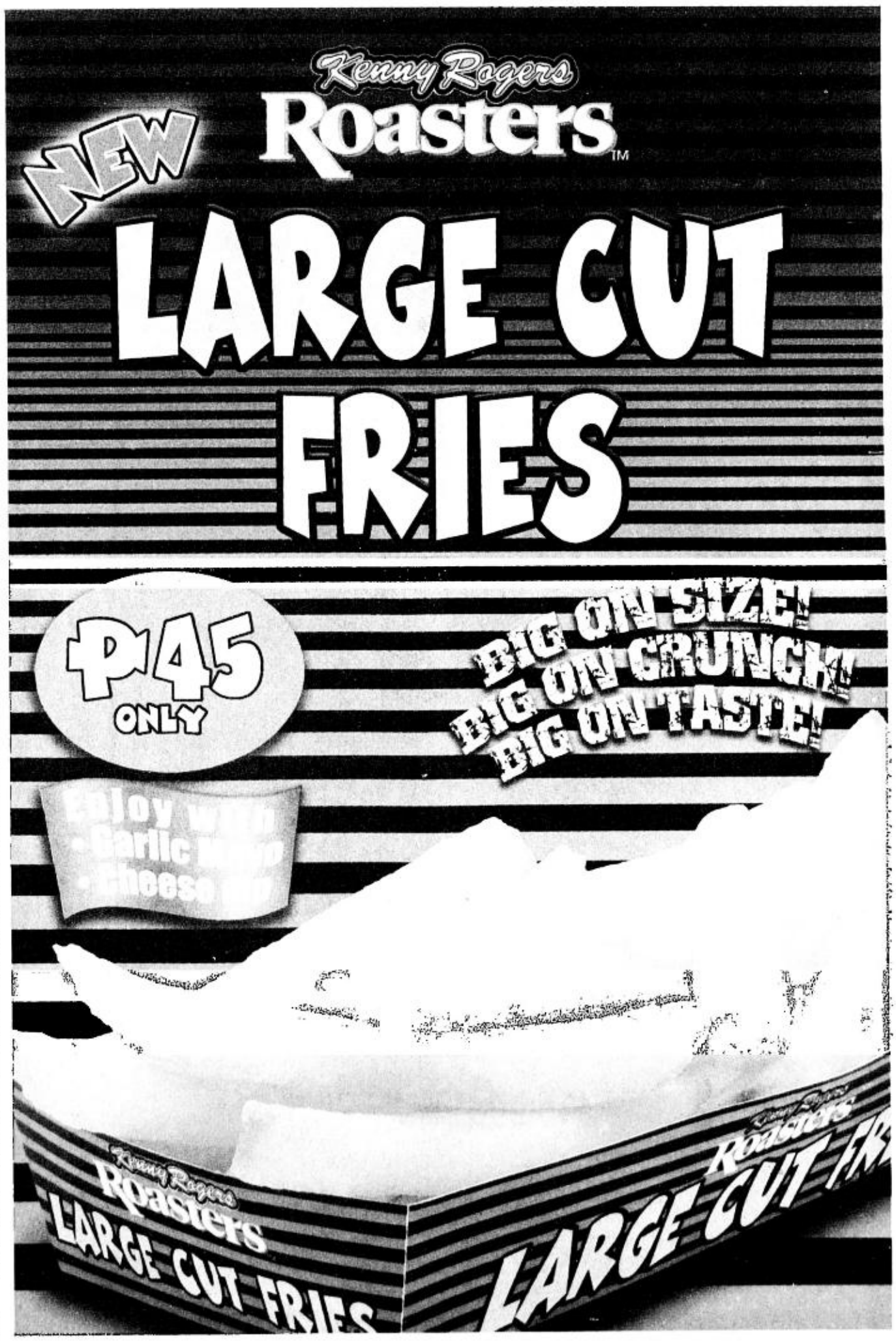
DID YOU KNOW...

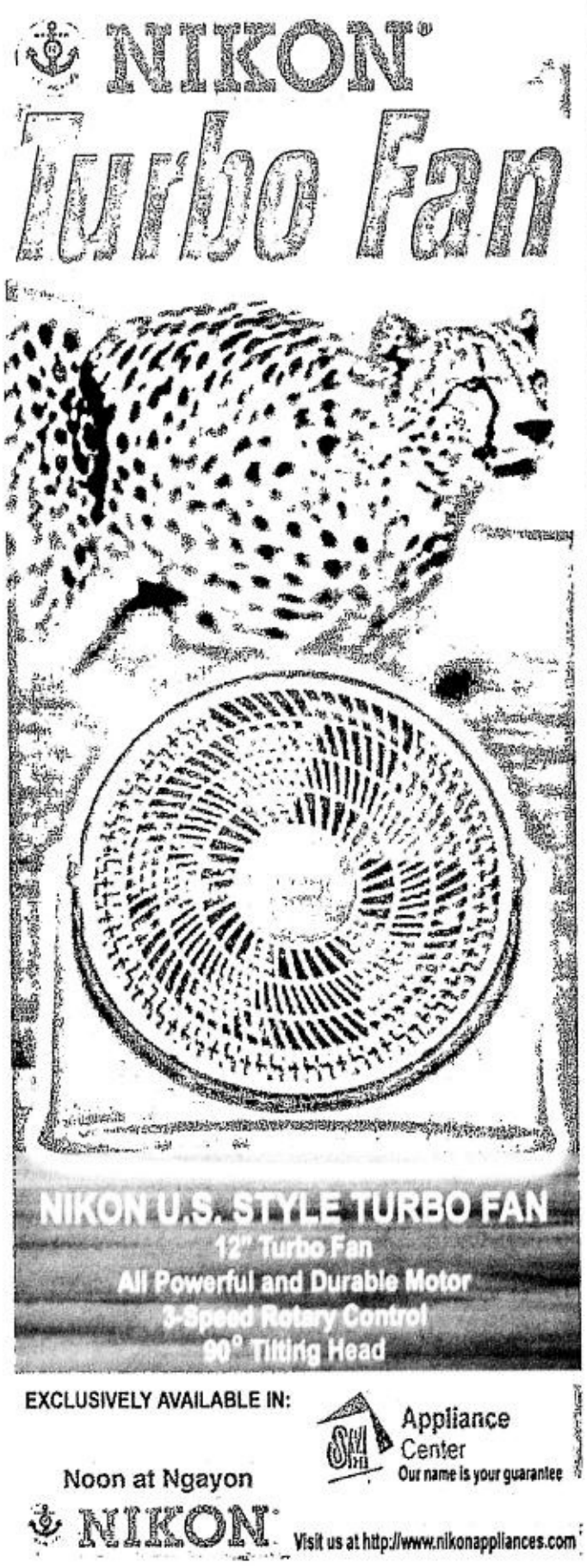
ANGEL "Darna" Locsin landed on Sabang Beach in Puerto Princesa City during the Holy Week with rumored boyfriend **Oyo Boy Sotto** and his mom **Dina Bonnevie** (who was with her handsome foreigner boyfriend). GMA7's latest *fantaserye* was reportedly set to shoot some scenes in Sabang, but neither Oyo Boy nor Dina are in the "Darna" cast.

Angel and Oyo Boy were seen holding hands while walking on the beach and around the hotel.

Dina and boyfriend left the city Monday.

Jofelle Tesorio, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau





OPENING TODAY

From page A2-1

Peter Debruge, in his March 4 review for Premiere magazine's website: "The movie's basic premise is this: Take Hollywood's most masculine actor and air-drop him into a sitcom scenario where he doesn't fit. With 'Kindergarten Cop' star Arnold Schwarzenegger busy tackling California's "gurly-man" politics and Hulk Hogan turned total has-been since 'Mr. Nanny,' that leaves Diesel as the top contender . . . Kids'll wish they had a babysitter like this around—an action figure who straps milk bottles and juice boxes to his utility belt, making suburban life feel like a constant Nickelodeon adventure, while parents will find themselves wishing their kids hadn't been exposed to so many bad examples."

NOW SHOWING

Miss Congeniality 2: Armed and Fabulous

Directed by John Pasquin
Starring: Sandra Bullock, Regina King, William Shatner

PLOT summary: FBI agent Gracie Hart (Bullock) has become such a media celebrity, her boss decides she should do PR work for the FBI. So she spends more time at the salon than at the shooting range, works the talk show circuit and promotes her book. When her friends, pageant winner Cheryl and emcee Stan (Shatner), are kidnapped in Las Vegas, Gracie turns into Dama, a drag queen, beats up the bad guys, dives into a pool of water to save her friends from a sinking ship.

Roget Ebert, in his March 24 review in the Chicago-Sun Times: "Having made the unnecessary 'Miss Congeniality (2000),' Sandra Bullock now returns with the doubly unnecessary 'Miss Congeniality 2: Armed and Fabulous.' Perhaps it is not entirely unnecessary in the eyes of the producers, since the first film had a worldwide gross of $212 million, not counting home video, but it's unnecessary in the sense that there is no good reason to go and actually see it.'

Alone in the Dark

Directed by Uwe Boll
Stars Christian Slater, Tara Reid, Stephen Dorff

PLOT summary: Edward Carnby (Slater), detective of the paranormal, unexplained and supernatural, investigates the recent, mysterious death of a friend. He discovers that evil demons worshiped by the ancient Abskani culture are planning on coming back to life in the 21st century to once again take over the world.

Michael Wilmington, in his review at the Chicago Tribune, wrote: "There are some stupid films that rock, if you turn your brain off and enjoy them. 'Alone in the Dark' isn't one of these, though it is very stupid. . . . Slater runs around looking constipated, Stephen Dorff glowers ineptly . . . (Reid's) performance is horrific with the diction of a moron, the expressiveness of a block of wood and the wardrobe of Streetwalker Barbie. . . the film itself has a grainy look, as if shot on stock recycled from a real movie."

Behind every successful band is a hard-working manager

Richard Tan is one of the most influential figures in the local music scene

By Claire Agbayani
Contributor

TAN, seated left, with producer Ito Rapadas, standing left, and Parokya ni Edgar showing off their latest record award.

SHOULD you meet Richard Tan while having absolutely no idea what he does, you'd never guess just by looking.

He manages several bands— really successful ones. In the past decade, Richard has handled such groups as The Youth, Feet Like Fins, Tribal Fish, Bag'iw, Sonnet 58, Candyaudioline, Moonstar '88, Cheese, Kamikaze and Parokya ni Edgar.

Tan is a decidedly "behind-the-scenes" type, but he is one of the most influential figures in the local music scene.

Born to pure Chinese parents who trace their roots to Amoy, China, Richard spent much of his childhood helping out in Eng Seng (now Shang Shang), a family-owned grocery in Manila's Chinatown.

And for all his quiet exterior, this man bagged big ad deals for Parokya—Chippy, Coke, San Miguel, Mitsubishi and Adidas.

INQUIRER Entertainment joined Richard and Parokya during a gig in Cavite.

What are your earliest childhood memories related to music?

Dancing in the maids' or servants' quarters to the Beatles' "Ob La Di, Ob La Da." When I was in grade 4, I joined a singing contest in Xavier. I wanted to do a Michael Jackson song but I was assigned "Battle Hymn of the Republic." I lost.

Were you into music, even back then?

I was the type who'd save my allowance so I could buy three vinyl LPs a week from Raon.

So, would you say you were into "the scene" then?

It was the time of XB, Ten of Another Kind. There were the Punks and the Chongs (or the New Wavers). I attended a couple of shows at Skatetown. "Oktober Storm," a big concert featuring Identity Crisis, The Dawn and Rage was an eye-opener. That's when I realized how huge the counter-culture was. This was around '86, '87.

How did you get into the music industry?

I sent telex messages to some of the British labels like Rough Trade and Factory Records. I inquired about the possibility of having their albums released in the Philippines. They ignored me at first. Eventually, they gave me one artist: The Bolshois. I paid the rights for P40,000. I hadn't even checked with suppliers. The first place I went to was Raon, where I was known to the store owners as a regular customer. I concentrated on three stores. The first one sold 100 tapes. By the second day, reorder *na*. Soon, Rudy Tee of WEA was asking if they could release it. I wanted to learn the system on my own. I went to Cebu and talked to distributors. I couldn't crack SM, except for Odyssey.

How did you become a manager?

I met Robert Javier, who was a writer for "The Score." He gave me a demo copy of The Youth. I listened and, wow, it wasn't perfect, *pero ang lakas ng dating*. I decided to record independently with Backbeat Records, and my label. Robert joined the band and started writing more songs. For another two to three years, we were just playing, and they were getting noticed.

In Club Dredd, the four [top] bands were Athena's Curse (which eventually became Alamid), Color It Red, Eraserheads and The Youth. Eraserheads was the first to get signed. When they went gold and platinum, record companies started signing bands. Alamid was the second to be signed by Warner. Everyone was just signing. Around two or three labels turned The Youth down, but Ed Formoso asked Chito Ilagan to listen to the group's karaoke demo. They recorded and mixed their debut album in less than five days. It went gold in a record two weeks, and platinum in two months.

How do you choose a band to manage?

I should personally like their music.

How would you describe your management style?

Laid-back. I'm content staying in the background.

How do you respond to remarks that you're there just to collect?

That's probably true, but I collect the right amount. Parokya benefitted from my experience with The Youth.

What are the highlights of your career?

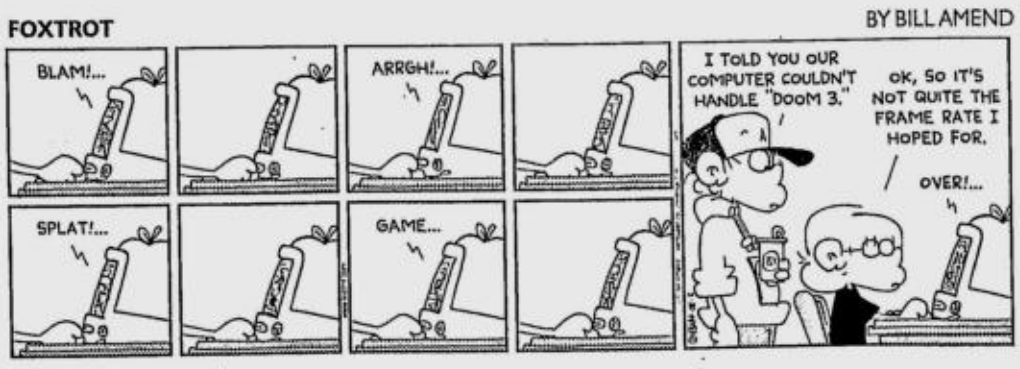
The first gold record of The Youth. The first Davao show of the Youth; they broke records. Campaigning for and winning the Favorite Artist Philippines MTV Asia 2003 (Parokya). *Bumalik ang* "suave" in Filipinos' vocabulary. Imagine such a dated word being used left and right again even in commercials.

Any regrets or disappointments?

Teeth and Feet Like Fins could have been bigger... the first breakup of The Youth... Parokya ni Edgar hasn't had one major concert... when relationships with record companies turn sour just because a band doesn't sell enough.

TV SCHEDULES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE.

FOXTROT — BY BILL AMEND



A. LIPIN — BY JESS ABRERA

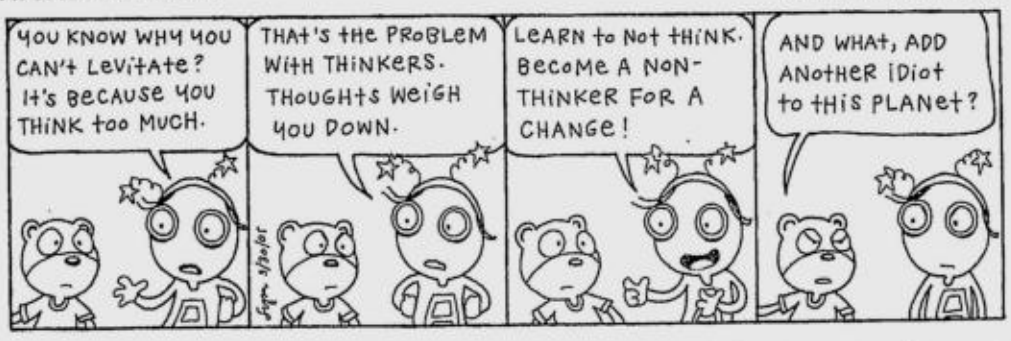
MARVIN — BY TOM ARMSTRONG

PUGAD BABOY — BY P.M. JUNIOR

BABY BLUES — BY JERRY SCOTT

MUTTS — BY PATRICK McDONNELL

ATOMO AND WEBOY — BY LYRA GARCELLANO



DIVINE COMEDY — BY STEVEN PABALINAS

HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCIS DRAKE

YOU BORN TODAY: You have a lot of creative, artistic energy. You also have a strong drive to succeed. Failure does not deter you. You need to do things your own way, in your own time. You have a very clear vision about what you want to achieve. Work hard this year to build and construct things.
Birthdate of: Norah Jones, singer; Celine Dion, singer; Eric Clapton, musician/songwriter.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): This is a wonderful day! Plan to have a good time. Enjoy the company of others. You're particularly friendly and charming today, and others want to be in your presence.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): Your ambition is aroused now because fiery Mars is at the top of your chart. It's OK to go after what you want; you just might get it!

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): This is a lovely day to enjoy the company of others. Attend clubs, organizations and meetings. Socialize with friends. Someone wants to do a favor for you or give you a gift. Accept!

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): You present an attractive image to the world right now. This is a good day to persuade important people to agree with you. Don't be afraid to make suggestions!

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): Everything connected with publishing, the media, higher education and travel is beautifully favored today. Make plans for exciting trips somewhere. Inquire about taking a course or going back to school.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): Sometimes the universe takes things from us; sometimes the universe gives us things. Others are beneficial to you now. People want to give you gifts, do favors for you and lend you things.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): Partnerships and close friendships mean a lot you now. Fortunately, you find it easy to love others. Naturally, they respond with warm affection because everybody loves to be loved.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): Do something to make where you work feel more attractive. Pleasant surroundings can promote productivity. Your job is very rewarding today.

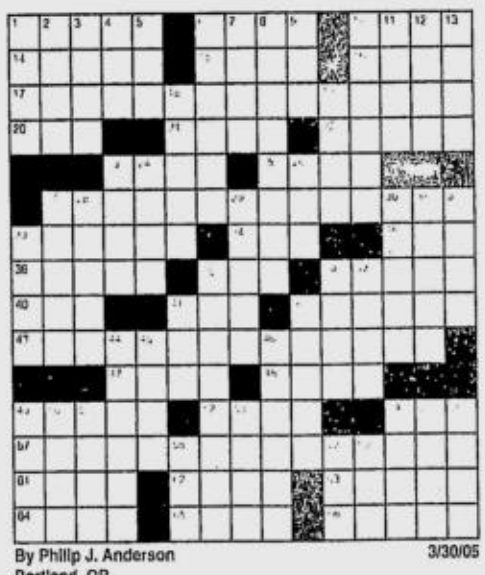
SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): This is a fabulous day for parties, fun, romance and playful times with children. You want to have a good time! Call up a friend to help you celebrate.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): Whatever you do to make where you live look more attractive will please you today. Entertain at home. Enjoy family gatherings. This is a great day for real estate deals as well!

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): Your communication skills have been excellent lately—and today they're fabulous! Talk to everyone, especially siblings. Your ability to write and communicate are also wonderful.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): This is the day to shop for beautiful things. Buy something lovely for yourself and for loved ones. It's also a great day to boost your earnings.

DAILY CROSSWORD



By Philip J. Anderson
Portland, OR
3/30/05

ACROSS
1 Costume jewelry
6 Stereo adjuncts
10 Wineglass part
14 Negative particle
15 Electrical cable
16 Verdi masterpiece
17 Business order
20 Dijon donkey
21 Meal scraps
22 Property claims
23 Herring's kin
25 Poetic tributes
27 Political order
33 Meditative ones
34 NY gambling parlor
35 Create lace
36 Feeds the pot
37 AARP members
38 Terre __, IN
40 Half of B.S.
41 Food from taro
42 Buffalo team
43 Military order
47 Fine spray
48 Valuable stones
49 Go with the flow
52 Actress Gilbert
54 Lend a hand
57 Class order
61 Citrus drinks
62 Lays down the lawn
63 Twirler's stick
64 Fancy schmancy
65 Golfer's gadgets
66 Snatch

DOWN
1 South American rodent
2 Some time hence
3 Male parent
4 Zenith
5 Rock producer Brian
6 Tony, Oscar and Edgar
7 Kitchen glove
8 Separates before laundry
9 SSS word
10 Pain specialist
11 Neap or ebb
12 Idyllic garden
13 Red planet
18 Pride sounds
19 Baldwin of "Malice"
23 Popeye's _ Pea
24 Towel ID
26 Record a voice-over
27 Body blow
28 Roman port
29 Shaped like a doughnut
30 Vehicular 180
31 Given a score
32 Summers in Provence
33 Fem.'s opposite
37 Tapless tap dancing
38 Soccer star Mia
39 Arab garments
41 Opp. of neg.
42 Sully
44 Like a rascal
45 Old-time actress Naldi
46 Female beast
49 Quickly, please!
50 Extinct bird
51 Surefire shooters
53 Helper
54 First part of a play
55 Flapjack chain's letters
56 Unit of force
58 D-Day craft
59 6-pack muscles
60 Lacking experience

Tuesday's Puzzle Solved

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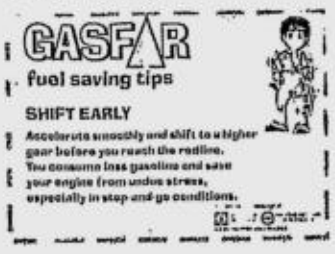
3/30/05



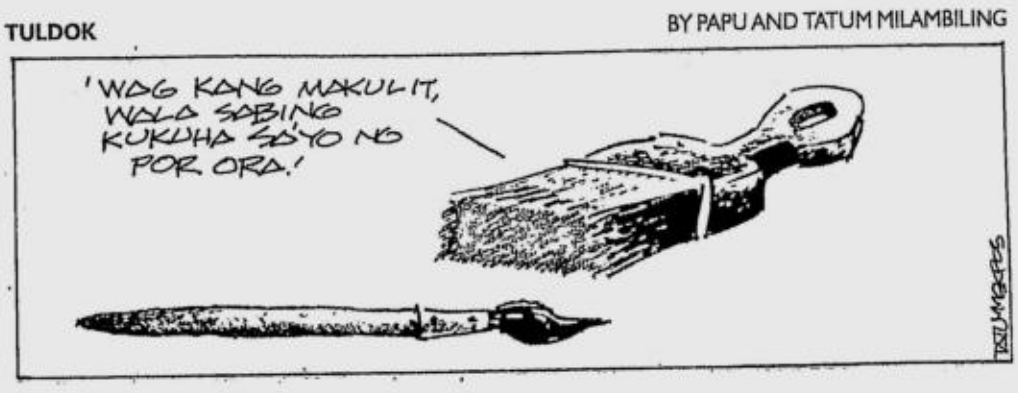
MIKROKOSMOS — BY JOMIKE TEJIDO

BEN — BY DANIEL SHELTON

KIKO MACHINE — BY MANIX ABRERA

LOVEKNOTS — BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO

TULDOK — BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING



PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

Sharon sets big US tour

AFTER A seven-year absence from the US concert circuit, Sharon Cuneta hits the road again this May and June.

Sharon's last performances in the United States broke house records in Atlantic City, Reno, Las Vegas, San Francisco and Los Angeles.

Initially, Mega Concert Tour 2005 is set at: Moran Performing Arts Theater in Jacksonville, Florida, May 8; Chicago, Rosemont Theater, May 14; Mark Etress Arena and Trump Taj Mahal in New York/Atlantic City, May 22; Reno Events Center, May 29; Starlight Theater, Pala Casino Resort and Spa in San Diego, June 5; and Shrine Auditorium in Los Angeles, June 11.

Sharon's special guests are Ogie Alcasid and Robert Seña. Interested parties may call 1-800-484-2654, enter code 1311 or 1-866-708-1892; or e-mail ahi 901@gmail.com.

SHARON Cuneta

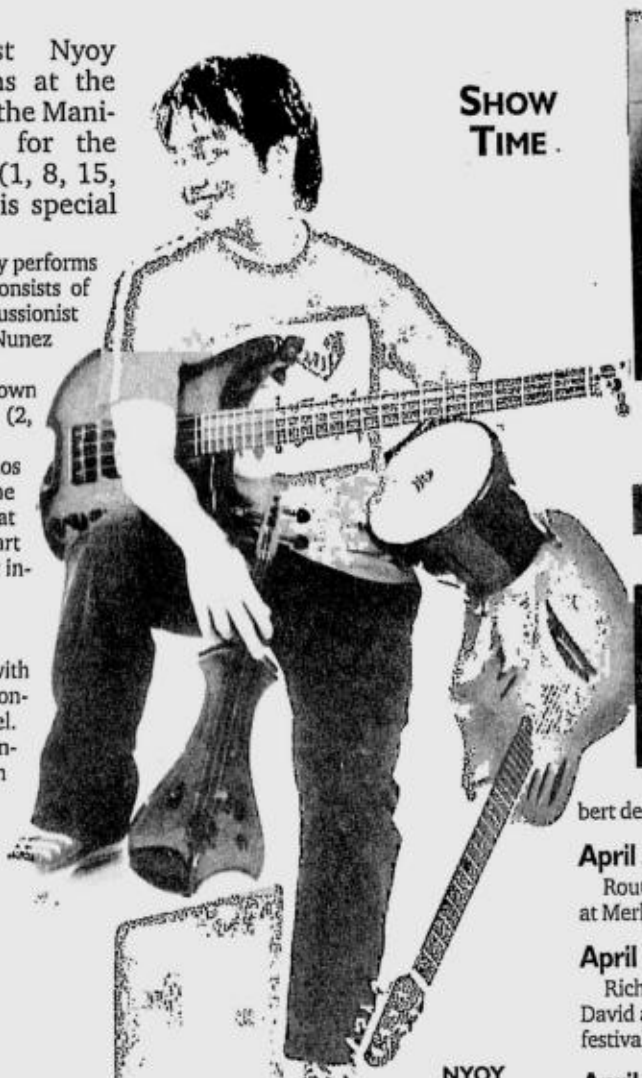
Nyoy and Mannos salu

ACOUSTIC artist Nyoy Volante performs at the Captain's Bar of the Manila Mandarin Fridays for the whole month of April (1, 8, 15, 22 and 29). Rebekah is special guest.

With his band Mannos, Nyoy performs Beatles favorites. The band consists of bassist Cocoy Aranas, percussionist Glenn Dalit, violinist Jerome Nunez and drummer Meinard Albis.

Rebekah will have her own shows all Saturdays of April (2, 19, 16, 23 and 30).

The show, "NV & Mannos Salute the Beatles," is part of the Kuh Ledesma Presents series at the Captain's Bar. All shows start at 9 p.m. For details and ticket inquiries, call 721-0635.



NYOY Volante

SHOW TIME

SYIL

ROBERT Seña and Isay Alvar

bert de Pano performs before the sho

Tonight

Ladine Roxas performs with guitarist Jerome and percussionist Lei at the Century Park Hotel.

At Merk's Bistro Bar in Greenbelt, Richard Merk goes on stage with Eddie Katindig and Sandra Lim.

Moonstrucks play at Funn Side.

Tomorrow

Avril Lavigne and Simple Plan in Bonez 2004 Tour at Bonifacio Global City Open Field. Call Ticketworld outlets 891-9999.

Johnny Cash and The Jukebox Cardinals at Funn Side on Timog Ave., Quezon City.

April 1

Ella May Saison performs at the Discovery Suites' Serendipity Lounge, 9 p.m.

Gary V and Roxie Barcelo in the second leg of "Gary V Hits . . . Philippine Tour" at the Leyte National High School in Tacloban City, and April 9 at the Pana-ad Park and Sports Complex in Bacolod City.

April 2

Rachelle Ann Go at Robinsons Angeles.

The Department of Education's Cantus Firmus Chorale stars in "Sinalaya 05" a Teatro Marikina, 3 p.m. and 7 p.m. Ken Punzalan of GMA 7's "StarStruck" is special guest. Admission is free. "Panaghoy ng mga Bata," a fund-raising gig spearheaded by Cesar Montano at Merk's Bar Bistro, 8 p.m.

Rebekah at the Manila Mandarin's Captain's Bar.

Divo Bayer performs at Arkdia with 2004's "Star in a Million" grand champion Frenchie Dy. Arkdia is located at Remedios St., Malate, Manila. Call 400-9776.

April 3

Rachelle Ann Go at Robinsons Cainta.

April 4

"Tosca Puno ... It's Time" 9 p.m. at Merk's. Special guests are Tosca's father, Rico J. Puno, Richard Merk and Rox Puno. Al-

April 5

Route 70 Band starts Tuesday gig at Merk's.

April 6

Richard Merk, Eddie Katindig David and Sandra Lim start Wednesd festival this month at Merk's.

April 7

Robert Seña and Isay Alvarez k Thursday gigs at Merks' this mont Company's Rueben Laurente sings the show. For inquiries, call 757-4750

Dance diva Sybil performs at the (ta Activity Center, 7 p.m.

April 8

Acoustic Jive at Merk's.

Sybil at Alabang Town Center, 6 p.

Tim Tayag, Al Manalo and Mike U "April Fools—Stand Up Comedians Loose!" 7 p.m. at San Mig El Pueblo gas. Call 637-5499.

April 9

Sybil at Ayala Center Cebu, 8 p.m.

Forte at Merk's.

April 10

Rachelle Ann Go at Robinsons Iasm

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2 (DOLBY) MISS CONGENIALITY 2 PG13
3 (DOLBY) BE COOL PG13
4 (DOLBY) ALONE IN THE DARK R13

PREMIERE
(DOLBY) ROBOTS GP

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3 MS. CONGENIALITY 2
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5 THE PACIFIER

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2 SHAOLIN VS' EVILDEAD
3 RESERVED
4 RESERVED
5 (DOLBY) MS. CONGENIALITY 2
6 THE PACIFIER

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1 (DOLBY) SON OF THE MASK
2 RESERVED

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1 (DOLBY) BOOGEYMAN
2 (DOLBY) HITCH
3 (DTS) CONFIDENCE
4 (GOLD DTS) MISS CONGENIALITY 2
5 (GOLD DOLBY DIGITAL) BE COOL
6 (GOLD DTS) THE PACIFIER
7 (GOLD DOLBY) ROBOTS
8 (DOLBY) BAHAY NI LOLA
9 (DOLBY) HOSTAGE
10 (DOLBY) ALONE IN THE DARK

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THE PACIFIER
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MISS CONGENIALITY 2
BOOGEYMAN
LEMONY SNICKETS
HITCH
MILLION DOLLAR BABY
HOSTAGE

ALI MALL CINEMAS
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2 THE PACIFIER
3 BOOGEYMAN
4 ALONE IN THE DARK
5 SHAOLIN VS. EVIL DEAD

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1 ROBOTS
2 BUKID AY BASA
3 HOSTAGE
4 RESERVED

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1 ALONE IN THE DARK

Jade Cinema
(Angeles City) tel (045) 887.5001 to 03
1 (DOLBY EX) MILLION DOLLAR BABYS
2 FINAL CUT
3 (DTS EX) HOSTAGE
4 FIVE CHILDREN

Cine Nepo
(Angeles City) tel (045) 887.0121
1 MILLION DOLLAR BABYS
2 FINAL CUT
3 (DOLBY) HOSTAGE
4 (DTS) FIVE CHILDREN

Cine Nepo
(Dagupan City) tel (075) 515.8489
1 MASK-2 SON OF THE MASK
2 LEMONY SNICKETS
3 (DOLBY) BUNSHINSABA
4 (DTS) BAHAY NI LOLA

Centre Plaza Cinema
(Balanga, Bataan) tel (047) 237.7007
1 MASK-2 SON OF THE MASK
2 BAHAY NI LOLA

EASTWOOD CINEMAS
(Eastwood City Walk 2, Eastwood City E. Rodriguez Jr. Ave (C-5) Quezon City) tel 687.6963 or 72
1 (DOLBY) BE COOL
2 (DOLBY) PACIFIER
3 (DOLBY) MS. CONGENIALITY 2
4 (DOLBY) BOOGEYMAN

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Movie Theatres of the New Millenium
Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7383
1 HOSTAGE
2 (DTS) CONFIDENCE
3 (DOLBY) SHAOLIN VS' EVILDEAD
4 FIVE CHILDREN

Cinema 2000 Pavilion Mall
(Binan) tel (049) 411.1146
1 HOSTAGE
2 (DOLBY) CONFIDENCE
3 (DTS) SHAOLIN VS' EVILDEAD
4 FIVE CHILDREN

Cinema 2000 Cinemagix
(Urdaneta) tel(075) 568.6771
1 MASK -2 SON OF THE MASK
2 LEMONY SNICKETS
3 (DOLBY) BAHAY NI LOLA

Cinema 2000 Metrotown
(Tarlac) tel (045) 982.1729
1 ROBOTS
2 NED KELLY
3 (DOLBY) HITCH
4 (DTS) BAHAY NI LOLA

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Plaridel) tel (044) 795.3320
1 CURSED
2 HITCH
3 (DOLBY) ROBOTS

Lianas Cinema
(Alabang) tel 850.1276
1 (DTS) HIGH EXPLOSIVE
2 HAPDI NG TAGINIT
3 NENA INOSENTE
4 (DTS) INFECTION

Lianas MovieCity
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7202
1 (DOLBY) CONFIDENCE
2 SHAOLIN VS' EVILDEAD
3 (DTS) HOSTAGE
4 FIVE CHILDREN
5 LEGENDARY STREET FIGHTER

Mega Center Mall
(Cabanatuan City) tel (044) 463.3283
1 BUNSHINSABA
2 HITCH
3 (DTS) ROBOTS
4 (DOLBY) BAHAY NI LOLA

Fiesta World Mall
(Lipa) tel (043) 981.0790
1 MASK-2 SON OF THE MASK
2 NED KELLY
3 BAHAY NI LOLA
4 ROBOTS

Berma Cinema
(Baclaran) tel 879.2030 / 879.2029
1 BAHAY NI LOLA
2 ALONE IN THE DARK

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Araneta Center
Entertainment Guide

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BOOGEYMAN
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THE PACIFIER
HITCH
ALONE IN THE DARK
MILLION DOLLAR BABY
MISS CONGENIALITY 2
HOSTAGE

ALI MALL CINEMAS
1 MISS CONGENIALITY 2
2 THE PACIFIER
3 BOOGEYMAN
4 ALONE IN THE DARK
5 SHAOLIN vs EVIL DEAD
DOLBY DIGITAL dts SDDS

ARANETA COLISEUM SHOWS
2005 PBA FIESTA CONFERENCE APR. 1
4:45pm SHELL vs SAN MIGUEL 7:35pm RED BULL vs STA LUCIA
2005 PBA FIESTA CONFERENCE APR. 3
4:45pm TALK N TEXT vs COCA COLA 7:35pm PUREFOODS vs ALASKA

CENTER EVENTS
SALE EVENTS: Fornarina- Upper Ground Floor, Gateway Mall (ongoing until April 15)
NEW STORES: Papyvore and A Different Bookstore at Shopwise Arcade
PERFORMANCES: Guarana on April 1, Shanice Michaels on April 2 & Cooky Chua on April 3 at The Gazebo of Gateway Mall

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'Kung Fu top winne

HONG KONG—Stephen Chow Fu Hustle" was named best fi 24th Hong Kong Film Award ny Sunday, but art-house direc Kar-wai's romance "2046" s top acting honors.

In an evenly split contes Yee's suspense thriller "On Mongkok" walked away best directing and best scrip

But "Kung Fu Hustle" an were the big winners of t clinching 12 awards betwee

Former Cannes winner ung and "Crouching Tiger, Dragon" star Zhang Ziyi lead acting awards for their "2046"—a follow-up to Wo the Mood For Love," the sto affair between a married and man played by Leung.

Leung reprises his "2046"—the number of t where Leung's character an mer lover rendezvoused plays Leung's new lover.

Leung and Zhang also

Paula Abdu probation

LOS ANGELES—US singer Pa was sentenced to two years' Thursday after pleading no hit-and-run after allegedly fl scene of a minor car crash, cials said.

The 1980s pop sensation, known for her role as a judge TV talent show "American Ido so ordered to pay $1,075 in restitution to the other drive in the incident.

Abdul, 42, did not appear Los Angeles but a lawyer e no-contest plea on her beha ing that she neither denied n mitted the charge.

A spokesperson for the p said earlier that the former c choreographer was involved minor traffic accident" on a L freeway in December.

She could have faced months in jail and a fine o convicted after a trial, ac

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ute the Beatles

IM Tayag, Al Manalo and Mike Unson

RACHELLE Ann Go

ALVIN Barcelona

April 11
Bernie Uy at Merk's.

April 15
Acoustic Jive at Merk's.

April 16
Aretha and the Souled Out Band at Merk's.

April 17
Rachelle Ann Go at Robinsons Pioneer.

April 18
Bernie Uy at Merk's.

April 22
Acoustic Jive at Merk's.

April 23
Forte at Merk's.

April 24
Rachelle Ann Go at Robinsons Metro East.

April 25
Bernie Uy at Merk's.

April 29
Acoustic Jive at Merk's.

Rachelle Ann Go in concert at Aliw Theater with Mark Bautista, Christian Bautista, Jay-R and Ogie Alcasid as special guests.

April 30
Aretha and the Souled Out Band at Merk's.

May 13 and 15
Alvin Barcelona, a Catholic lay preacher and singer-songwriter, in his first major concert, "Believe," at the Party Central, Mother Ignacia Avenue. For inquiries, reservations and sponsorships, call Beaconlight, 722-9562, or e-mail beacon@philonline.com.

Hustle,' '2046' rs of HK awards

's "Kung im at the ceremo- tor Wong kept the

t. Derek Nite in with the t prizes. t "2046" e night, n them. lony Le- Hidden von the roles in ng's "In ry of the woman

role in e room his for- Zhang

won top

acting honors at the Hong Kong Film Critics Society Awards announced earlier.

In an evening that featured the cream of the crop of Chinese cinema, "Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon" director Ang Lee presented a professional spirit award to Jackie Chan.

Chan said he appreciated the prize because it honored his professionalism and conduct, not just his artistic achievements.

"Outside of movies, this involves charity work... an actor's professional conduct, being punctual, respecting elders. These are very important things," he told reporters. "This is harder to win than a Hong Kong Film Award."

"Kung Fu Hustle" director Chow paid tribute to Bruce Lee, who was named "Chinese Film's Bright Star of the Century."

"He changed the way we looked at kung fu, changed the way we look at movies," Chow said. *AP*

il gets two years for hit-and-run

la Abdul robation ontest to eing the urt offi-

w better n the US ." was al- ines and involved

court in ered the . indicat- fully ad-

secution ncer and a "very Angeles

to six $1,000 if rding to

CAUGHT by camera phone

Frank Mateljan of the City Attorney's Office.

The other driver involved in the crash reportedly used a camera phone to snap a picture of Abdul's Mercedes Benz as it allegedly sped away from the scene. No one was injured in the fender-bender.

According to her lawyers, Abdul was unaware that her car had collided with another vehicle, which is why she did not stop. *AFP*

SHANG CINEPLEX

1 PACIFIER
MTRCB: GP
12:15, 2:40, 5:05, 7:30, 9:55

2 MISS CONGENIALITY 2
MTRCB: PG-13
11:00, 1:45, 4:30, 7:15, 10:00

3 BE COOL
MTRCB: PG-13
10:50, 1:35, 4:20, 7:05, 9:50

4 ALONE IN THE DARK
MTRCB: R-13

PREMIERE THEATRE — ROBOTS
MTRCB: GP

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1 BE COOL
12:00, 2:45, 5:30
8:15, 10:50
PG-13

2 PACIFIER
10:50, 1:15, 3:40
6:05, 8:30, 10:55
GP

3 MS. CONGENIALITY
12:10, 2:55, 5:40
8:25, 11:00
GP

4 BOOGEYMAN
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PG-13

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BE COOL PG13	ALONE IN THE DARK R13	MISS CONGENIALITY 2 PG13

st rmall — EDSA-SHAW — Tel. No. 726.61.50
3 Ms Congeniality 2
4 Shaolin Vs Evil Dead
5 Pacifier

METROPOLIS ALABANG star — Tel. No. 850.42.85
1 Alone In the Dark
2 Shaolin Vs Evil Dead
3 Reserved
4 Reserved
5 Ms Congeniality 2
6 Pacifier

st rmall — LAS PIÑAS — Tel. No. 873.50.04
1 Son of the Mask
2 Reserved

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633-0876

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HITCH
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3 THE PACIFIER
4 MISS CONGENIALITY 2
5 BE COOL
6 ROBOTS
7 BAHAY NI LOLA 2
8 HOSTAGE
9 ALONE IN THE DARK
10 RESERVED
11 RESERVED
12 RESERVED

sm city fairview
1 FINAL CUT
2 CONSTANTINE
3 CURSED
4 HOSTAGE
5 BAHAY NI LOLA 2
6 THE PACIFIER
7 MS. CONGENIALITY 2
8 ROBOTS
9 HITCH
10 MILLION DOLLAR BABY
11 SHAOLIN vs EVIL DEAD
12 ALONE IN THE DARK

sm city north edsa
1 RESERVED
2 RESERVED
3 BOOGEYMAN
4 ROBOTS
5 ALONE IN THE DARK
6 MS. CONGENIALITY 2
7 BE COOL
8 THE PACIFIER

sm city sta. mesa
1 RESERVED
2 RESERVED
3 RESERVED
4 LOVE ME IF YOU DARE
5 MS. CONGENIALITY 2
6 ROBOTS
7 BOOGEYMAN
8 THE PACIFIER
9 BE COOL
10 ALONE IN THE DARK

sm city southmall
1 ALONE IN THE DARK
2 ROBOTS
3 RESERVED
4 RESERVED
5 HOSTAGE
6 BAHAY NI LOLA 2
7 BE COOL
8 THE PACIFIER
9 MS. CONGENIALITY 2
10 BOOGEYMAN

sm city manila
1 THE PACIFIER
2 HITCH
3 SHAOLIN vs EVIL DEAD
4 MS. CONGENIALITY 2
5 BE COOL
6 HOSTAGE
7 ALONE IN THE DARK
8 CONSTANTINE
9 ROBOTS
10 BAHAY NI LOLA 2
11 CURSED
12 BOOGEYMAN

sm city bicutan
1 THE PACIFIER
2 MS. CONGENIALITY 2
3 BOOGEYMAN
4 ALONE IN THE DARK

sm cinema tutuban
1 RESERVED
2 RESERVED
3 RESERVED
4 RESERVED

sm supercenter sucat
1 THE PACIFIER
2 ALONE IN THE DARK
3 MS. CONGENIALITY 2
4 BOOGEYMAN

LUZON

sm city pampanga
1 HOSTAGE
2 CURSED
3 SHAOLIN vs EVIL DEAD
4 HITCH
5 ROBOTS
6 BAHAY NI LOLA 2

sm city baguio
1 MILLION DOLLAR BABY
2 ROBOTS
3 BAHAY NI LOLA 2
4 INFECTION

sm city batangas
1 ROBOTS
2 CURSED
3 BAHAY NI LOLA 2
4 BUNSHINSABA

sm city marilao
1 CURSED
2 MILLION DOLLAR BABY
3 FINAL CUT
4 ROBOTS

sm city bacoor
1 MILLION DOLLAR BABY
2 ROBOTS
3 THE PACIFIER
4 BAHAY NI LOLA
5 SHAOLIN vs EVIL DEAD
6 MS. CONGENIALITY 2
7 HOSTAGE
8 CURSED

sm city dasmariñas
1 MILLION DOLLAR BABY
2 BAHAY NI LOLA 2
3 FINAL CUT
4 THE PACIFIER

sm city lucena
1 PHANTOM OF THE OPERA
2 HITCH
3 LEMONY SNICKET'S A SERIES OF UNFORTUNATE EVENTS
4 ROBOTS

VISAYAS AND MINDANAO

sm city cebu
1 MARIE ERNESTINE SCHOOL GRADUATION RITES
2 ASSAULT ON PRECINCT 13
3 RESERVED
4 RESERVED
5 FINAL CUT
6 BUNSHINSABA
7 HOSTAGE
8 HITCH

sm city iloilo
1 THE AVIATOR
2 RESERVED
3 SON OF THE MASK 2
4 MILLION DOLLAR BABY
5 HITCH
6 BAHAY NI LOLA 2
7 RESERVED
8 CURSED

sm city davao
1 ROBOTS
2 BAHAY NI LOLA 2
3 SON OF THE MASK 2
4 BUNSHINSABA
5 MILLION DOLLAR BABY
6 HITCH

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1 HITCH
2 SON OF THE MASK 2
3 BAHAY NI LOLA 2
4 CURSED

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2 BOOGEYMAN	7 ROBOTS
3 BE COOL	8 HOSTAGE
4 ALONE IN THE DARK	9 CONSTANTINE
5 PACIFIER	10 MILLION DOLLAR BABY

ERMITA — 536-7809 to 12

1 PACIFIER	
2 HOSTAGE	5 MS. CONGENIALITY 2
3 ROBOTS	6 BOOGEYMAN
4 ALONE IN THE DARK	7 BE COOL

METRO EAST — 682-8193 • 682-8199

1 MS. CONGENIALITY 2	5 PACIFIER
2 HITCH	6 BOOGEYMAN
3 ROBOTS	7 HOSTAGE
4 ALONE IN THE DARK	8 BAHAY NI LOLA 2

NOVALICHES — 935-3229/31

1 PACIFIER	5 ROBOTS
2 BOOGEYMAN	6 HOSTAGE
3 MS. CONGENIALITY 2	7 RESERVE
4 ALONE IN THE DARK	8 RESERVE

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5 SON OF THE MASK 2	5 WITHOUT A PADDLE

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3 THE FINAL CUT	3 HOSTAGE
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4 HOSTAGE	4 HOSTAGE
5 BAHAY NI LOLA 2	5 MILLION DOLLAR BABY
6 ROBOTS	6 CONFIDENCE

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2 HITCH	2 ROBOTS
3 BAHAY NI LOLA 2	3 BAHAY NI LOLA 2
4 BUNSHINSABA	4 SON OF THE MASK 2
5 SON OF THE MASK 2	5 CURSED
6 ROBOTS	6 MILLION DOLLAR BABY

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	4 HITCH	5 ROBOTS	6 THE PACIFIER	7 ALONE IN THE DARK
G1 GLORIETTA 1	1 BE COOL		2 THE PACIFIER	
	3 ALONE IN THE DARK		4 MS. CONGENIALITY 2	
ATC ALABANG TOWN CENTER	THX 1 THE PACIFIER	2 BE COOL	3 MS. CONGENIALITY 2	
	4 ROBOTS		5 BOOGEYMAN	
ACC ALABANG TOWN CENTER	1 ASSAULT ON PRECINCT 13	2 THE FINAL CUT	3 BUNSHINSABA	
	4 RAY		5 CLOSED	
GB1 GREENBELT 1	1 MS. CONGENIALITY 2			
	2 THE PACIFIER			
GB3 GREENBELT 3	THX 1 MISS CONGENIALITY 2 GUARANTEED SEATS	THX 2 THE PACIFIER GUARANTEED SEATS	3 SPANGLISH GUARANTEED SEATS	
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Why not a career in media?

IT'S GRADUATION time, so many young high school students are having to confront their future, decide on what to take up in college, and start preparing themselves for their life's work.

Young people who can't make up their minds shift from one course to another, hoping to eventually stumble on their final "destiny."

If you're still in a quandary, allow us to weigh in with these hopefully helpful points:

If you're really bright and gifted, why not decide on a life of public service to the mass audience of millions out there, and opt for a career in the media?

It's a complicated, confounding and frustrating field on bad days, but on good days, the opportunities for public service it offers simply can't be beat.

Since media people influence millions of people, it's absolutely important that the young people who enter the field should be well-prepared, motivated and principled.

This may seem to be a far-out notion, since many young people study Masscom because they think it's an easy and glamorous course that's going to make them rich and famous.

But that's a facile, lazy and opportunistic view of the field—which helps explain why work in mass communications here is mediocre and compromised, and why the huge media audience in this country is so poorly served.

The best way to turn this sorry situation around is to reject the lazy and opportunistic and to focus on the best and the brightest.

Imagine the great privilege of informing and affecting a potential audience of millions? That should be more than enough motivation and inspiration for you to decide to devote your life's work to serving that huge audience to the best of your ability.

So, young graduates, think about working in the media—but only if you're the best and the brightest. There are more than enough lazy opportunists around, so please don't add to the teeming, grasping throng. Happy graduation!

'Kamao' and 'Contender' compared

FIRST, there was "The Contender," the US TV boxing challenge hosted by **Sylvester Stallone**. Then, soon after, Channel 2 launched "Kamao," local TV's own search for the top amateur boxer in the land, hosted by **Robin Padilla**. How do the two reality sports challenge shows compare with each other?

On point of hosting, Robin goes overboard playing it tough, while Stallone doesn't have to. He knows that genuine toughness comes from within, and all external over-indications of the same can only be counter-productive, not to mention, occasionally funny. Robin Padilla is, occasionally, unintentionally funny.

The young boxers on the US show are more articulate than their Pinoy counterparts. They have no trouble expressing their thoughts and feelings about their lives and careers, while many of the Pinoys are reduced to predictable, monosyllabic comments and retorts.

This is a big deal, because both shows seek to personalize their boxing challenges and their attendant conflicts by going into individual boxer's insights into their lives, fears, ambitions, etc. You don't get very far with monosyllables in this regard, so "Kamao" is less personal and thus less empathetic in effect than "The Contender."

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

When it comes to the actual fighting, however, the Pinoy boxers hold their own. This is where we see them at their scrappy best, when they let their fists do the talking.

In fact, one of the matches we caught on "Kamao" was more exciting than a companion bout on Stallone's show.

All told, "The Contender" scores more points than "Kamao." Its challenges are more pertinent to the boxing theme, and are thus less distracting.

And its visualizations go way beyond the boxing arena as it shows its contestants struggling to triumph over their opponents and other obstacles, not just in the boxing ring, but in the game of life itself.

More shockers from celebs

ELLEN Degeneres: Kissing girls is more natural to me, but as a performer, I've only kissed guys for the camera. When I do kiss a girl for the camera, they're gonna make such a big deal about it.

Patrick Swayze: Good-looking people turn me off—myself included.

Elton John: I never had sexual interludes as a child. At all my AA meetings, people kept asking me if I was ever molested as a child. I told them, "I was dying to be molested!"

Michael Douglas: I'm your basic flasher. I've always loved exposing myself.

Madonna: All of my sexual experiences when I was young were with girls. I mean, we didn't have those sleep-over parties for nothing.

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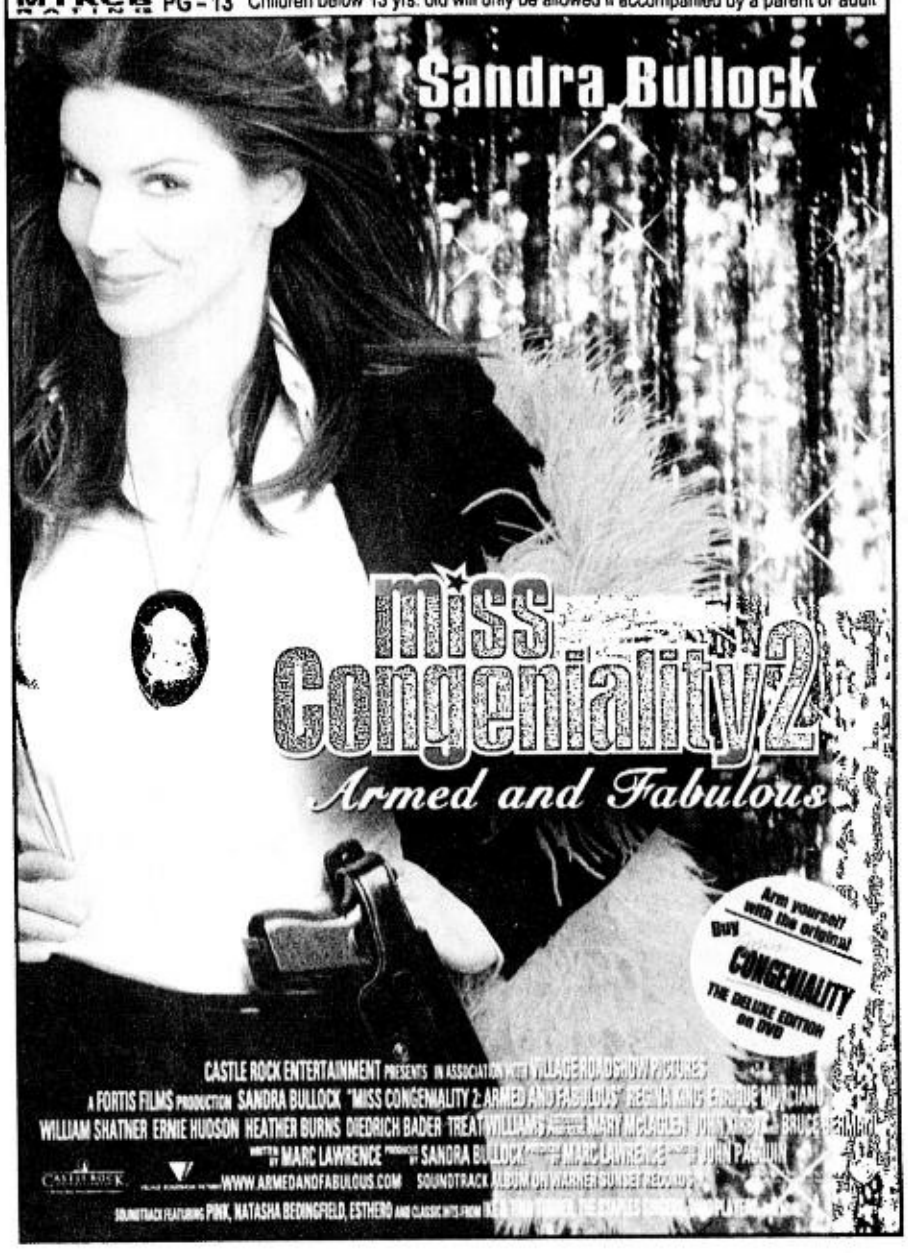

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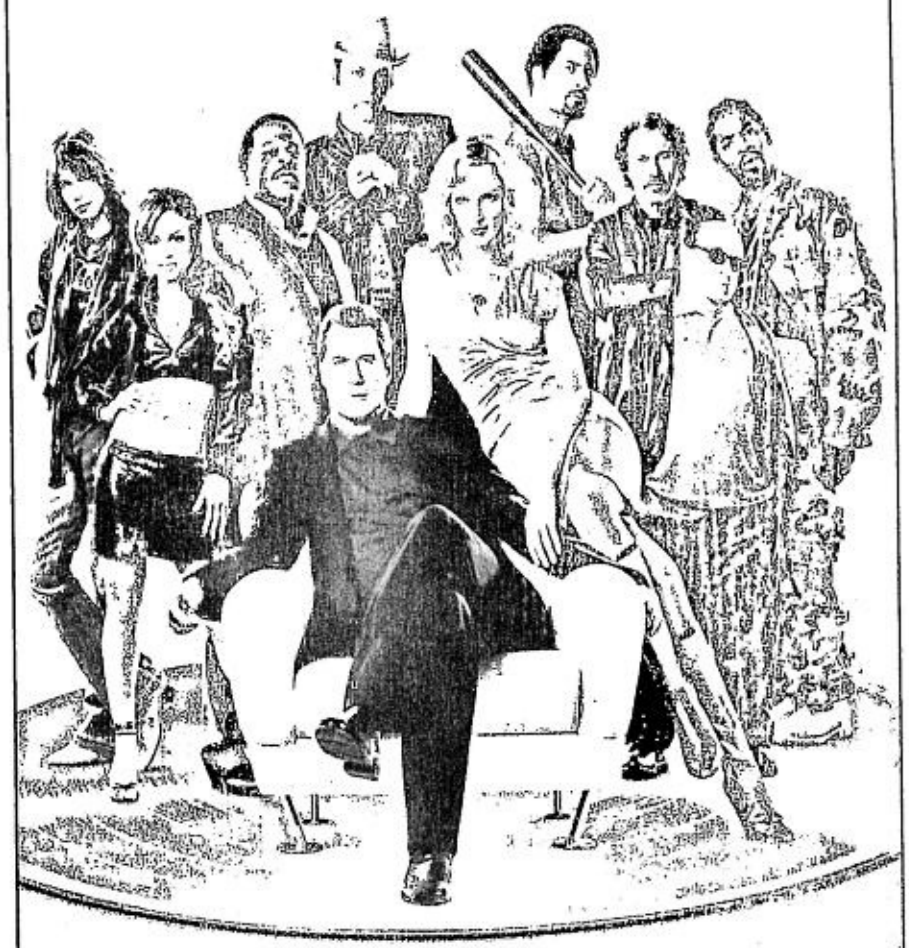

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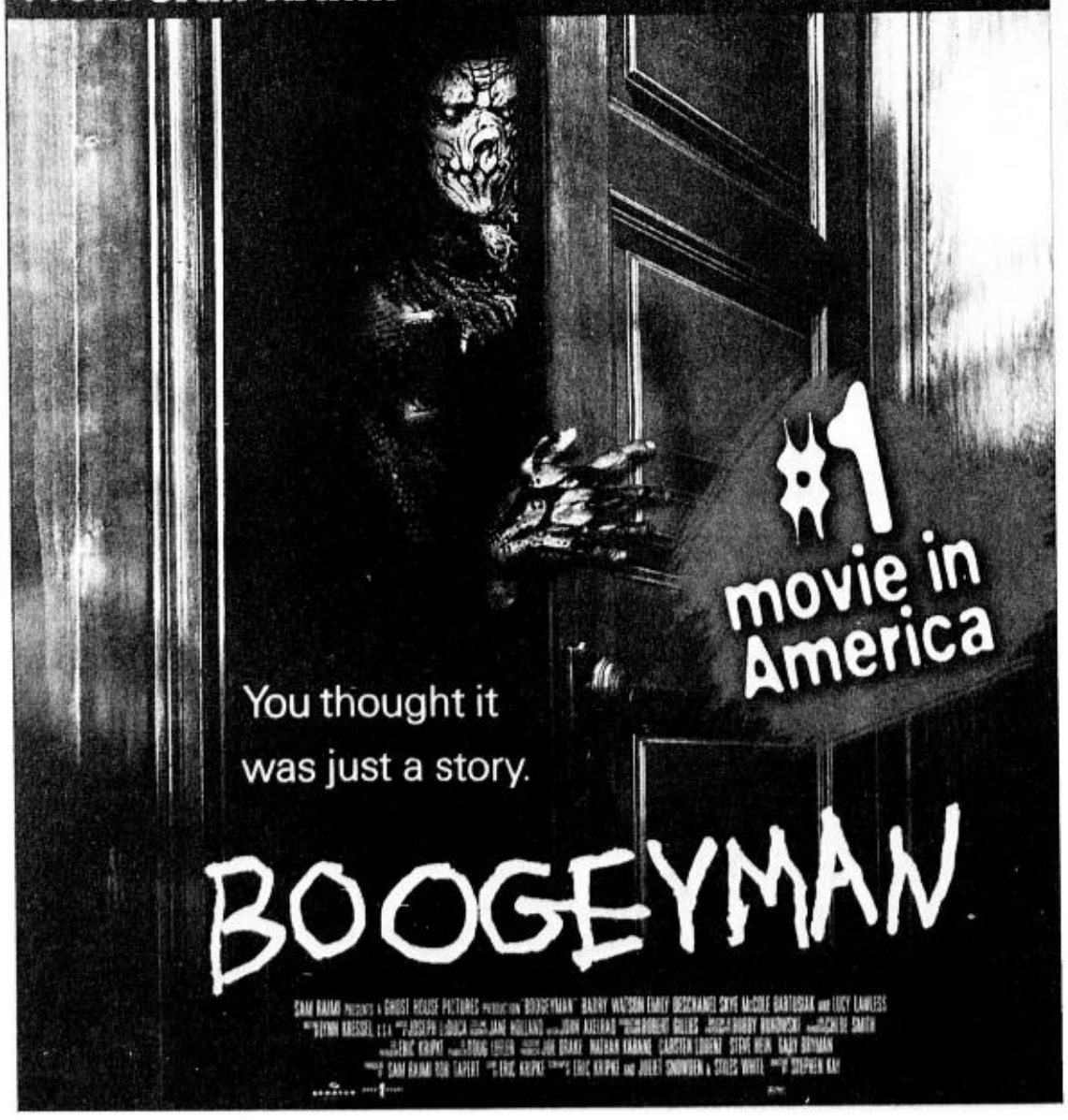
From SAM RAIMI - the director of SPIDERMAN



Sandra Bullock likes misfits

MISS Congeniality

NEW YORK—Like her character in "Miss Congeniality 2: Armed and Fabulous," Sandra Bullock has entered a new career phase.

After so many romantic comedies, the actress says 2002's "Two Weeks Notice" may have been her last hurrah in the genre. Co-star Hugh Grant was the "ultimate partner" and a fitting way to go out, she says.

She'll co-star in the upcoming independent movie "Crash" and is days away from wrapping a film based on Truman Capote's writing of "In Cold Blood" (she plays Harper Lee, Capote's childhood friend and author of "To Kill a Mockingbird"). A reunion with "Speed" co-star Keanu Reeves is in the works as well; they'll pair up for "Il Mare," a romantic drama.

Meanwhile ...

What attracted you to the "Miss Congeniality" sequel?

Marc Lawrence, the writer. He and I work together, obviously, a lot. We were doing something else a year later and he was talking about it and nobody was talking about it as a sequel or part two. He said, "Well, let me put it on paper." And I went, "I'm not doing it."

You were recently quoted as saying you've grown tired of romantic comedies.

I just said I'm not going to do them for a while. And all of a sudden they were like, (deep voice) "You're never, ever doing them?"

Was it important to you that your partner in "Miss Congeniality 2" be a woman?

When I made the first "Miss Congeniality," I wondered why is it that all the comedies are always romantic comedies? Why can't I be like a physical comedian? I would literally ask, "What is Jim Carrey not doing, and can we change it to a female?" For some reason, they didn't think that women would be accepted being that physical and that out there.

You seem to be intent on portraying strong, funny independent women onscreen.

It's not so much conscious, it just is—if that's viewed as strong and independent. I mean, I find people's weaknesses really strong. If they can say "something screwed up and I don't know how to fix it and I made a huge mistake." It's just what I believe. It's for men and women. I like the misfits. I like the people who feel like they're absolutely inept and have no place—and that's basically everybody.

Do you get a lot of scripts that fit the bill?

Not a lot. But there's a lot of good material and a lot of great writers and that's why I've had a production company (Fortis Films) for a long time. We develop our own.

You turned 40 last July, which puts you in rarified air as an A-list actress. Why do you think actresses traditionally have not had much longevity?

I have no idea. I'm working more than I ever have. The whole 40 thing has been a media thing. Nobody asked me what it was like to turn 36—that was a hell of a year. *AP*

"BOOGEYMAN" opened at #1 in the U.S. boxoffice

Barry Watson in "Boogeyman"

From **Sam Raimi's** (SPIDERMAN) stylish thriller, **BOOGEYMAN**, takes one of horror's mythical figures and transports him into the 21st century.

Tim Jensen (**Barry Watson**) is a successful magazine editor with a beautiful girlfriend (Tory Mussett), his childhood continues to haunt him. When he was only eight years old, Tim watched his father get eaten by the Boogeyman, or at least that's how he remembers it. Of course, no one believed him then—not even his mother (**Lucy Lawless**), who has just recently passed away. Wracked with guilt for not having been there to say goodbye, Tim decides to spend the night in his childhood home and confront the Boogeyman once and for all. But before that happens, he reunites with his old friend Kate (Emily Deschanel) and meets a young girl (Skye McCole Bartusiak) who is holding onto a dark secret of her own.

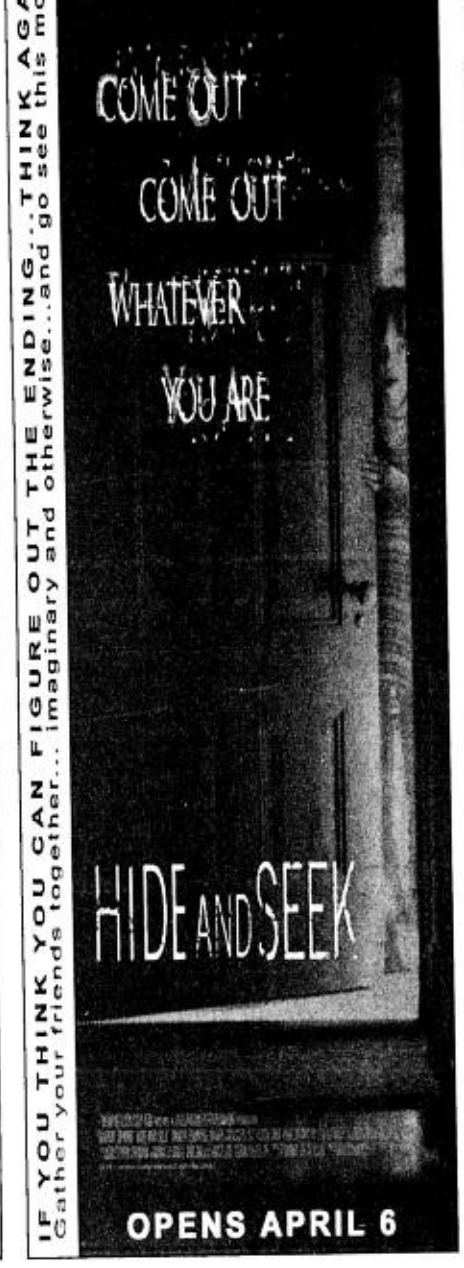
Boogeyman is layered with exceptional horror frights and "don't look" terrifying moments bolstered by characterization and storytelling strength more likely to be found in a psychological drama. Raimi told director Stephen Kay that in addition to the tension and the emotional impact of drama, they wanted 13 big frights in the movie.

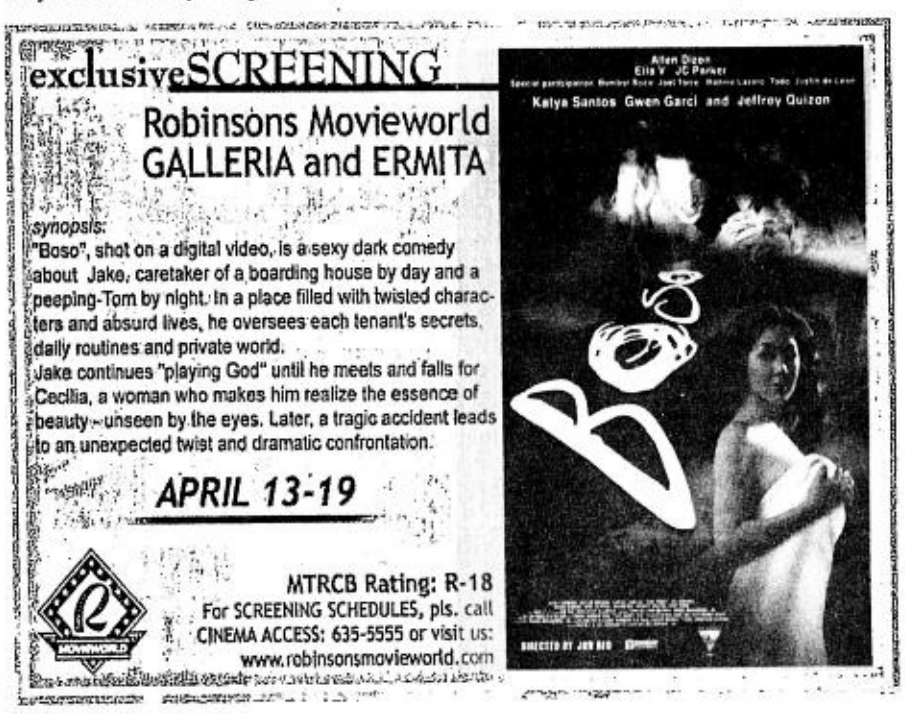
Visual effects supervisor Brent Gilmartin notes that the process of devising the *boogeyman* was long and ever evolving. Kay asked Gilmartin and his team to create a figure that was ghost-like but not the ghost of someone. He explained that the boogeyman is unknown; that the mystery makes him scary. He wanted glimpses of his features at first, but at the end, when he was weaker, he wanted to see more of him. He wanted his energy pent-up like a cat about to pounce, quiet at first, and then an explosion of energy. He had to be a shape-shifter who moves through time and space (but faster), and is unpredictable, like a tornado that can touch down in any place.

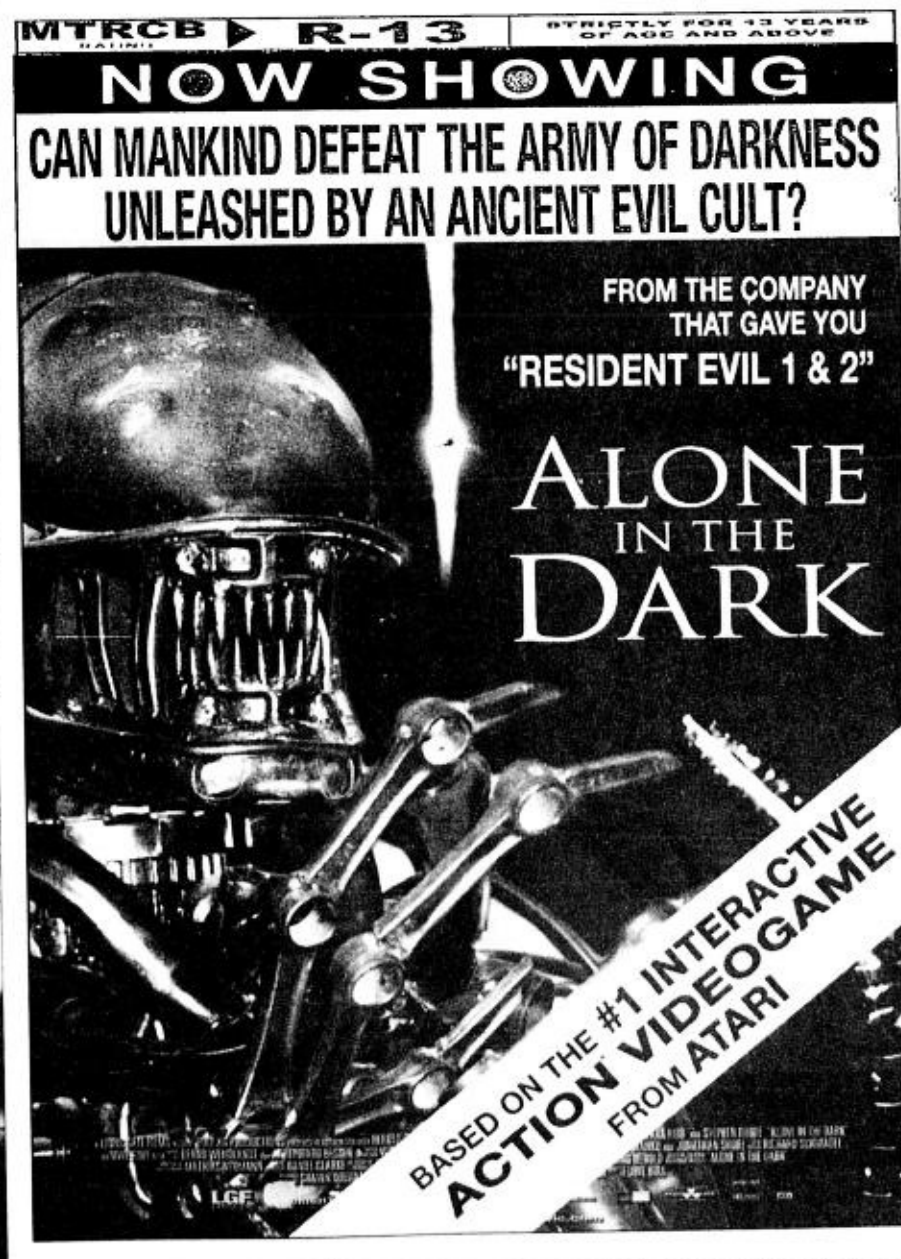
Boogeyman also called for mechanical special effects, most spectacularly for the climactic scene of Tim's showdown with the boogeyman, in which his bedroom is shaken with a force resembling a powerful earthquake.

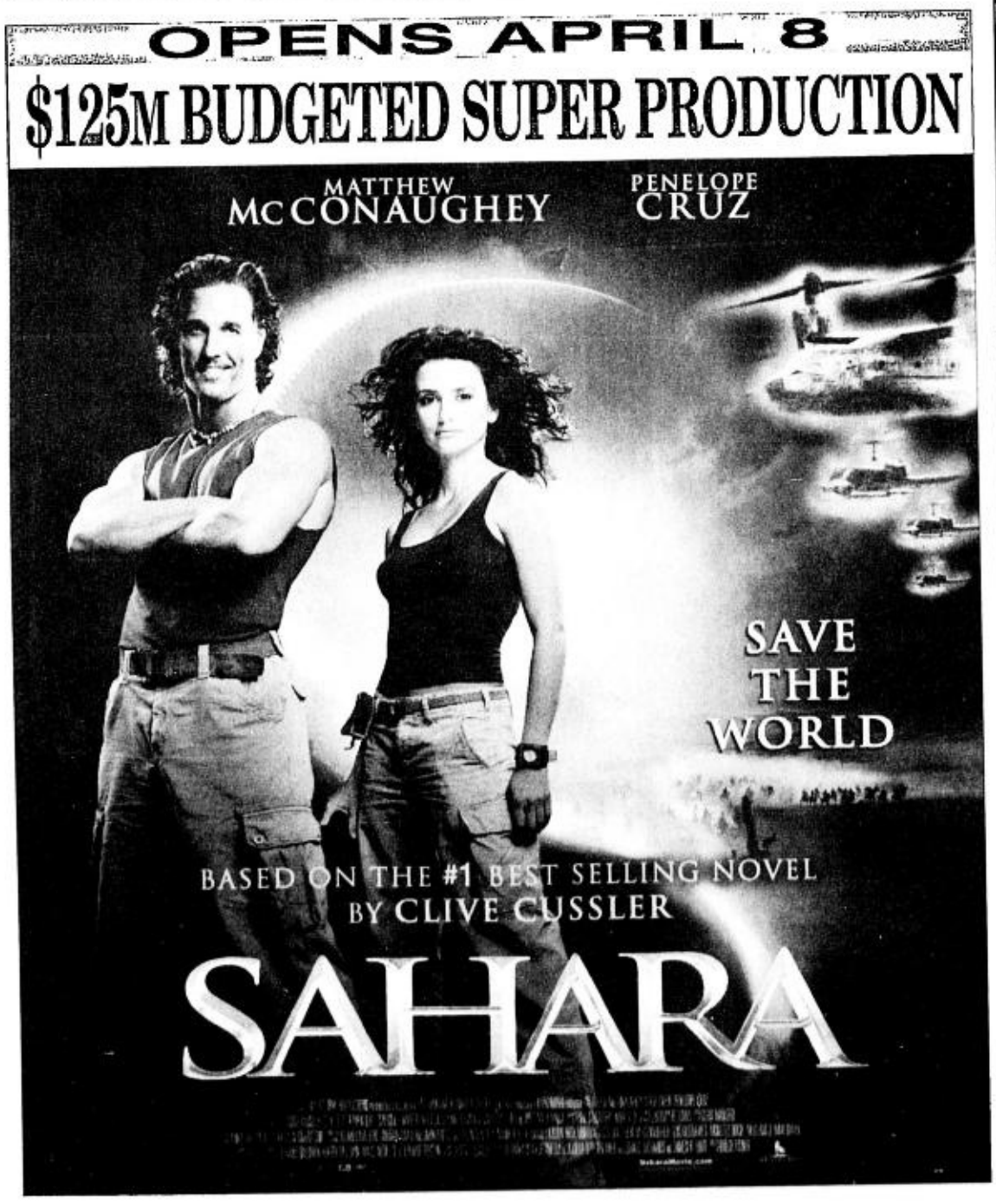
Sam Raimi describes **Boogeyman** as a coming-of-age horror story. "It's a horror movie about Tim's personal battle with fear," he says. "The boogeyman is the personification of fear. He's blurred, he's ambiguous, he's the unknown. He's simultaneously a universal fear and an incredibly specific fear. He's different for everybody, and this is Tim's particular version."

BOOGEYMAN opened at #1 in the U.S. boxoffice.









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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

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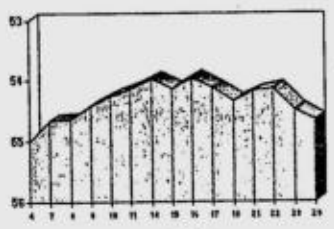


₱54.65 = $1
As of 5 p.m., March 29, 2005

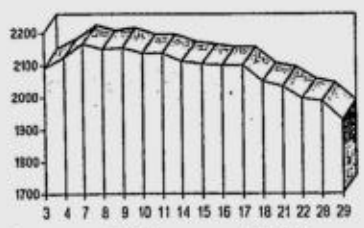
¥107.16 = $1
As of 5 p.m., March 29, 2005

GOLD: $427.00-427.50
per ounce Hong Kong, March 29, 2005

STOCK MARKET

Shares fall 2.77%

PSE COMPOSITE INDEX



SHARE prices closed sharply lower yesterday, falling 2.77 percent on continued heavy profit-taking as the regional markets sold off on concerns about the prospect of higher global interest rates led by the United States, dealers said.

A weaker local currency and concerns that Congress will fail to pass much-needed value-added tax (VAT) reform legislation during a three-day special session this week also pushed investors to the sidelines.

The Philippine Stock Exchange composite index fell 54.97 points to 1,931.98 after trading between 1,930.71 and 1,989.55. This was the weakest close since Jan. 18, when the market finished at 1,905.45.

Volume totaled 1.69 billion shares worth P2.06 billion. The broader all-shares index rose 2.43 points to 1,174.76.

Losers overwhelmed gainers 108 to 11, with 15 stocks unchanged.

"Investors are taking more profits and staying on the sidelines. Others are unwilling to get back in after the Easter break, thinking that the market's decline is not yet over since there are no fresh buying incentives," said Mark Alan Canizares of Citiseconline.com.

SHARES/ B2

By Michelle V. Remo

THE BANGKO Sentral ng Pilipinas yesterday warned that portfolio investments in the Philippines could head for the exit and, in the process, weaken the peso, given the rise in US interest rates and the uncertainty that the Arroyo administration could put on stream vital fiscal reforms.

BSP Governor Rafael Buenaventura said the country might experience capital flight, especially in the area of portfolio investments, as the increase in US interest rates usually entices investors to shift their money abroad.

What the government could do to keep the peso from falling is to create an attractive business environment in the country by assuring investors that plans to strengthen the fiscal sector, would be pursued, he said.

"(Portfolio investments) are sensitive to political and economic shortcomings. If investors feel that the reforms are not forthcoming, then they will try to sell their existing holdings," Buenaventura said in a briefing with reporters.

He said the country's performance in keeping existing portfolio investments was a significant factor that could contribute to the movement of the peso. "So, it is important that we convince them that reforms will be continuing and on the right track," he said.

The US Federal Reserve raised

BUENAVENTURA

again last week its policy rate by another 25 basis points to 2.75 percent. This has narrowed the gap between the US Fed rate and the BSP's policy rates of 6.75 percent (for overnight borrowing) and 9 percent (for overnight lending).

A narrowing of the gap in interest rates is disadvantageous to the Philippines because it could result in capital flight as investors get enticed to place their money abroad.

The capital market has been waiting whether the BSP would also raise its policy rates to match that of the US Fed, but the BSP is keeping a cautious stance in reacting to the increase in US interest rates, considering a negative impact of high interest rates on local borrowers.

"If ever we have to do anything it will have to be measured, but it is not clear yet if we have to increase our rate," he said.

Buenaventura said the increase in US interest rates would

CAPITAL/ B3

Big industry group seeks revival of OPSF

By Abigail L. Ho

THE INFLUENTIAL Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry is calling on the government to revive the defunct Oil Price Stabilization Fund (OPSF) to relieve the public of "shocking" oil price movements and to eventually stabilize local pump prices.

In a briefing yesterday, PCCI president Donald Dee said reviving the OPSF was the only way for the public to track local pump prices and not be shocked every time there was an adjustment in prices.

Under the deregulated environment, the public was always subjected to sudden oil price spikes, he said.

"The OPSF is better because it will make prices more predictable," he explained.

However, he said proper safeguards would have to be put in place to ensure that the OPSF would not be used for wrong purposes.

Asked where the seed money from the OPSF would come from, he said local oil firms would have to jack up prices at the onset.

As this was the case, timing was very important, he said.

"We must wait for demand to go down. We must look for a certain price window, a level that will cause the least pain (for consumers)," he said.

He said that the benefits of reviving the OPSF would be reaped in the longer term, when prices start to stabilize.

As reviving the OPSF would be tantamount to regulation, the PCCI also called on the government to repeal RA 8479 or the Downstream Oil Industry Deregulation Act of 1998.

Malacañang has ordered a review of the Oil Deregulation Law to determine whether or not there was a need to amend the current law.

An independent panel was commissioned to conduct the review. The five-person panel is headed by former Energy Regulatory Commissioner and SGV and Co. chair Carlos Alindada.

The other four members of the panel are University of Asia and the Pacific College of Economics dean Peter Lee Yu, Confederation of Land Transportation Organization of the Philippines secretary general Alberto Suansing, Petroleum Dealers Association of the Philippines president Mercedes Garcia, and former director of the defunct Petroleum Board Joey Leviste.

The review panel has 90 days to conduct a series of consultations with various industry stakeholders to enable them to come up with recommendations on how the existing law could be improved.

At the end of the 90-day period, the panel's evaluation of the law as well as its recommendations would be submitted to the Department of Energy.

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Jardine sells stake in realty firms

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

HOLDING firm Jardine Davies Inc. (JDI) has approved the sale of the company's interests in two property firms to its affiliate firm Hongkong Land (PPI) BV.

In a disclosure to the stock exchange, JDI said its board yesterday cleared the sale of JDI's combined 22-percent stake in two companies—Jardine Land Inc. (2.32 million shares) and Jardine Properties (520,000)—to Hongkong Land for $2.5 million.

Jardine Land's shares were valued at approximately $2.2 million while those of Jardine Properties were worth roughly $300,000.

The company will also assign in favor of Hongkong Land the shareholder advance granted to Jardine Land worth P27.15 million.

JDI will also assign to Hongkong Land all rights and obligations under Jardine Land arising from the completion of the sale.

Sources said that JDI had decided to shift its focus away from the property sector with the sale of its entire 22 percent in two property companies to the Hong Kong real estate developer.

JDI is 95 percent owned by the Jardine Matheson Group of the Netherlands. It is one of the oldest and most diversified companies operating in the country with interests in marketing and distribution of agricultural chemicals in the country. Through its subsidiaries and associates, it also manages building and industrial materials distribution, agricultural supplies, sugar milling, middle-income housing and other businesses.

Its joint venture subsidiary Jardine Land has middle-income housing projects in Taguig dubbed Lexington and another in Cavite called Greenwoods.

FORUM HIGHLIGHTS*

Afternoon Session
(Start: 1:30pm End: 4:30pm)
1. Lito Tanjuatco, President - DLSAA
2. Dr. Armin A. Luistro, FSC President - DLSU. "Forum Opening Remarks"
3. Rene J. Buenaventura, CEO - Equitable PCIB. Keynote Speaker
4. Ramon Isberto, Head Public Affairs - Smart. "Communicate Effectively or Be Left Behind"
5. Juan Miguel del Rosario, VP HR - Unit. Pulp and Paper Co. Inc.. "Have Emotional Intelligence, Have a Great Career"
6. Franz Pumaren, Basketball Coach - DLSU. "Down but Not Out: Career Applications from the 2004 DLSU Basketball Championship Team"

Evening Session
(Start: 5:00 pm End: 8:00 pm)
1. Dr. Carmelita I. Quibengco, EVP - DLSU. "Opening Remarks"
2. Franco del Rosario, CEO - BSigma Consulting. "The Single Biggest Thing That Can Help or Hinder Your Career"
3. James Matti, CEO Ayala ADN. "It is the Minor Details which Lead to the Major League!"
4. Gerard Sonvictores, SGV Partner, "The 3 Musts Executives Look For In Candidates"
5. Boy Martirez, Head Per. Comm. & Mob. Services Smart. "The Fastest Way To Become The Chief Marketing Officer"

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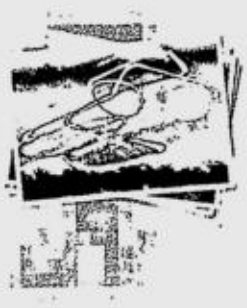

Entrepreneurial Operations Management

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May 23 - 27, 2005

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Innovating Supply Chain Management
- Management of the Supply Chain
- Outsourcing

Management of Technology for Process Innovations
- Technology identification, acquisition and transfer

Learning Applications (Guided Workshop Output)
- Enhancing Competitiveness (to increase sales revenue)
- Sustaining Productivity Increases (through stakeholder benefits)

Prof. Francisco P. Bernardo, Jr. is a core faculty and guru of the AIM Asian Center for Entrepreneurship (ACE). His areas of specialization are operations management and system analysis. He also teaches management of technology for development.

Prof. Bernardo has worked with companies engaged in manufacturing, construction, insurance, banking and agriculture, as well as with government agencies and educational institutions. He was co-founder and partner of the Asian Consulting and Training Group, Inc.

Prof. Rene T. Domingo is a teacher, writer, and management consultant. He is the Sime Darby Professor of Manufacturing at the Asian Institute of Management in Manila and the program director of its Advanced Manufacturing Management Course. Schooled and trained in Japan, he has written quality and service management and world-class manufacturing practices. He trains and consults for a number of Asian companies in the field of total quality management, business process engineering and lean manufacturing. He has done research on the operations of Japanese joint venture companies in Southeast Asia.

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DISCLOSURES

LEPANTO Consolidated Mining Company will hold its annual stockholders' meeting on April 18, 4 p.m. at Rigodon Ballroom, The Peninsula Manila, corner Ayala and Makati Avenue, Makati City. Only stockholders of record as of March 7 are entitled to notice of and to vote at the meeting. Proxies must be filed with and received not later than by the close of business hours on April 11.

* * *

MANILA Mining Corp. will hold its annual stockholders' meeting on April 18, 10 a.m. at Penthouse, Lepanto Building, 8747 Paseo de Roxas, Makati City. Only stockholders of record as of March 9 are entitled to notice of and to vote at the meeting. Proxies must be filed with and received not later than by the close of business hours on April 11.

* * *

MANILA Electric Company fixed April 11 instead of Feb. 28 as the record date for the determination of stockholders entitled to notice and vote at the annual stockholders' meeting on June 28, 9 a.m at the Meralco Theater, Lopez Building, Ortigas Avenue, Pasig City.

* * *

SALCON Power Corp. rescheduled their annual stockholders' meeting from May 25 to May 31 at 9:30 a.m. *Compiled by: Chona Galang, PDI Research*

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of March 29, 2005)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
BANKS & FINANCIAL SERVICES					
BANKS					
Asiatrust Dev. Bank Inc.	4.1	4.1	4	4	16,000
Banco de Oro Univ. Bank	27	27	25	25.5	1,024,000
Bank of the Phil. Islands	55	55	53.5	53.5	791,600
China Banking Corp.	660	670	660	670	1,820
Export and Ind. Bank Inc.	0.75	0.75	0.68	0.69	550,000
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	46	47	45.5	47	46,600
International Exch. Bank	18.5	18.5	18.25	18.25	204,000
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	36	36	35	35.5	786,800
Philippine National Bank	35	35	32	32	123,000
Rizal Comm. Banking Corp.	14	14	14	14	3,400
Security Bank Corp.	27.5	27.5	26	26.5	226,300
Union Bank of the Phil.	28	28	28	28	25,800
FINANCIAL SERVICES					
Bankard Inc.	0.98	0.98	0.98	0.98	100,000
First Metro Invest. Corp.	250	250	250	250	100
Manulife Financial Corp.	2500	2500	2500	2500	260
PCI Leasing & Fin. Inc.	1.06	1.06	1.06	1.06	756,000
Sun Life Financial Inc.	1700	1725	1700	1725	1,820
COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL					
COMMUNICATION					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	15.25	15.25	15	15.25	61,100
Digital Telecom Phils Inc.	1.22	1.22	1.14	1.14	5,787,000
Easycall Phils. Inc.-Com	4.7	4.7	4.7	4.7	7,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	875	875	865	870	25,400
Ipeople Inc.	4.85	4.85	4.55	4.6	178,000
Island Info and Tech Inc.	0.048	0.048	0.048	0.048	1,600,000
ISM Communications Corp.	0.0525	0.0525	0.05	0.05	3,900,000
Manila Bulletin Pub. Corp.	2.04	2.04	2.04	2.04	3,000
Pilipino Tel. Corp.	3.5	3.5	3.35	3.4	2,852,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	1390	1390	1370	1370	219,400
Ivantage Corp.	0.74	0.74	0.71	0.72	3,190,000
Philweb Corp.	0.021	0.021	0.018	0.019	93,700,000
POWER, ENERGY & OTHER UTILITIES					
Manila Electric Co. A	19	19	18	18	49,500
Manila Electric Co. B	27.5	27.5	25.5	25.5	896,400
Manila Water Co. Inc.	6.5	6.5	6.4	6.4	19,727,000
Petron Corp.	3.6	3.6	3.5	3.55	5,409,000
Trans-Asia Oil and Energy	1.4	1.4	1.3	1.3	223,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Asian Terminals Inc.	1.88	1.88	1.88	1.88	10,000
Aboitiz Trans. Sys. Corp.	1.72	1.72	1.72	1.72	30,000
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	7.5	7.5	7.2	7.2	2,468,000
Keppel Phils. Marine Inc.	0.58	0.58	0.56	0.56	370,000
CONSTRUCTION & OTHER RELATED PRODUCTS					
Engineering Equip. Inc.	0.65	0.65	0.6	0.6	230,000
Holcim Philippines Inc.	3.75	3.75	3.45	3.45	7,305,000
Republic Cement Corp.	1	1	1	1	20,000
FOOD, BEVERAGES & TOBACCO					
Alaska Milk Corp.	3.7	3.7	3.7	3.7	5,000
Ginebra San Miguel Inc.	35	35	34.5	35	69,000
Jollibee Foods Corp.	26.5	27	26.5	26.5	396,400
RFM Corp.	0.94	1	0.94	1	40,000
Swift Food Inc.	0.37	0.37	0.35	0.35	260,000
San Miguel Corp. A	56	56	55.5	56	368,100
San Miguel Corp. B	81	81.5	80.5	81.5	132,300
Universal Robina Corp.	11.75	12.25	11.5	12.25	166,600
Vitarich Corp.	0.29	0.29	0.29	0.29	500,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Abacus Con Res & Hdg A	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	131,000,000
Abacus Con Res & Hdg B	0.011	0.011	0.011	0.011	20,000,000
Ayala Corp.	7.8	7.8	7.3	7.4	6,706,000
Alsons Cons. Res. Inc.	0.55	0.55	0.52	0.52	480,000
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	4.6	4.6	4.2	4.3	1,147,000
Alliance Global Group Inc.	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	1,000
Ajo.Net Holdings Inc.	0.055	0.055	0.047	0.047	2,800,000
A. Soriano Corp.	2.04	2.04	1.9	1.92	1,941,000
APC Group Inc.	0.38	0.38	0.36	0.36	960,000
Balabac Resources & Hldgs	0.76	0.76	0.76	0.76	50,000
Bacnotan Cons Indus Inc.	15.25	15.25	15	15	2,900
Boulevard Holdings Inc.	0.14	0.14	0.14	0.14	50,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	1.12	1.12	1.02	1.04	34,516,000
A Brown Company Inc.	0.95	0.95	0.95	0.95	300,000
Basic Consolidated Inc.	0.21	0.21	0.2	0.2	1,000,000
Crown Equities Inc.	0.24	0.24	0.24	0.24	720,000
Southeast Asian Cement	0.5	0.5	0.45	0.45	170,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	3.75	3.75	3.4	3.4	3,122,000
Ever-Gotesco Resources	0.05	0.05	0.05	0.05	200,000
Filinvest Dev. Corp.	1.58	1.58	1.5	1.5	574,000
Fil-Hispano Holdings Corp.	9.6	9.6	9.3	9.3	507,000
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	53.5	54	47.5	47.5	1,525,500
Forum Pacific Inc.	0.24	0.24	0.24	0.24	140,000
Global Equities Inc.	0.1	0.105	0.1	0.1	16,410,000
House Of Investments Inc.	1.78	1.78	1.6	1.6	1,978,000
Ionics Inc.	1.58	1.58	1.58	1.58	20,000
J G Summit Holdings Inc.	3.5	3.5	3.45	3.5	256,000
Macroasia Corp.	2	2	2	2	165,000
Medco Holdings	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	50,000
Megaworld Corp.	1.48	1.48	1.36	1.4	4,997,000
Multitech Inv. Corp.	0.44	0.44	0.44	0.44	200,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.52	0.52	0.47	0.48	19,480,000
Prime Orion Phils. Inc.	0.27	0.27	0.26	0.26	400,000
Roxas Holdings Inc.	1	1	1	1	141,000
Solid Group Inc.	0.56	0.56	0.56	0.56	70,000
SM Investments Corp.	233	233	226	230	3,900,800
South China Resources Inc.	0.75	0.75	0.7	0.7	450,000
Uniwide Holdings Inc.	0.16	0.16	0.16	0.16	1,090,000
Wellex Industries Inc.	0.19	0.22	0.16	0.22	1,710,000
Waterfront Phils. Inc.	0.28	0.28	0.27	0.28	1,750,000
MANUFACTURING, DISTRIBUTION & TRADING					
Music Semiconductors Corp.	1.7	1.7	1.62	1.62	519,000
Mabuhay Vinyl Corp.	0.84	0.93	0.83	0.93	370,000
Picop Resources Inc.	0.13	0.13	0.12	0.12	6,790,000
HOTEL, RECREATION & OTHER SERVICES					
Belle Corp.	1.32	1.34	1.22	1.26	9,491,000
Fairmont Holdings Inc.	1	1	0.98	0.98	1,320,000
Leisure & Resorts Corp.	1.52	1.52	1.45	1.48	1,936,000
Premiere Ent. Prod. Inc.	0.28	0.28	0.28	0.28	1,320,000
BONDS, PREFERRED & WARRANTS					
ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp. (Pdr)	15	15	14.5	14.75	445,000
PLDT (10% Pref) Series P	10.25	10.25	10.25	10.25	100
PLDT (10% Pref) Series W	10.25	10.25	10.25	10.25	100
PLDT 10% Pref Series Aa	10.25	10.25	10.25	10.25	100
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	8.4	8.4	8	8	4,118,000
Araneta Properties Inc.	0.31	0.31	0.31	0.31	20,000
Cebu Holdings Inc.	1.02	1.02	0.95	0.98	1,435,000
C & P Homes Inc.	0.29	0.29	0.28	0.28	970,000
Cyber Bay Corp.	0.29	0.29	0.27	0.27	1,370,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.52	0.52	0.47	0.47	19,870,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	1.6	1.6	1.42	1.44	17,346,000
MRC Allied Ind. Inc.	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	140,000
Robinsons Land Corp.	4.55	4.6	4.55	4.6	130,000
Phil Realty And Holdings	0.27	0.27	0.25	0.25	2,680,000
SM Development Corp.	1.7	1.7	1.68	1.68	95,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	8	8	7.7	7.7	2,885,000
MINING					
Abra Mining & Industrial	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	159,000,000
Atlas Cons. Min & Dev't	5.8	5.8	5.5	5.6	309,000
Benguet Corp. A	8.9	8.9	8.4	8.4	90,000
Benguet Corp. B	24	24	22.5	22.5	5,000
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co A	0.37	0.37	0.33	0.33	6,510,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co B	0.41	0.42	0.37	0.38	15,000,000
Manila Mining Corp. A	0.017	0.017	0.015	0.016	79,300,000
Manila Mining Corp. B	0.023	0.023	0.021	0.021	199,800,000
Omico Corp.	0.008	0.008	0.007	0.007	567,000,000
Philex Mining Corp. A	1.1	1.12	1.08	1.12	1,047,000
Philex Mining Corp. B	1.36	1.38	1.26	1.3	4,614,000
Semirara Mining Corp.	40.5	40.5	38	38.5	1,843,500
United Paragon Mining Co.	0.27	0.27	0.27	0.27	150,000
OIL					
Oriental Pet. & Min. A	0.0065	0.0065	0.006	0.0065	116,000,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. B	0.007	0.007	0.0065	0.0065	36,000,000
The Philodrill Corp. A	0.34	0.34	0.34	0.34	70,000
The Philodrill Corp. B	0.37	0.37	0.35	0.35	700,000
Pacifica	0.013	0.013	0.012	0.012	15,000,000
Petroenergy Res. Corp.	2.6	2.8	2.6	2.8	105,000
Sinophil Corp.	0.19	0.19	0.175	0.175	6,890,000
Vulcan Ind'l	0.36	0.36	0.36	0.36	250,000

CURRENCIES

March 29, 2005 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.775314	1.000000	54.3930
Japan	Yen	0.007242	0.009341	0.5081
United Kingdom	Pound	1.446891	1.866200	101.5082
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.099405	0.128212	6.9738
Switzerland	Franc	0.644216	0.830910	45.1957
Canada	Dollar	0.636547	0.821018	44.6576
Singapore	Dollar	0.469660	0.605767	32.9495
Australia	Dollar	0.596303	0.769112	41.8343
Bahrain	Dinar*	2.056645	2.652661	144.2862
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.206751	0.266667	14.5048
Brunei	Dollar	0.468242	0.603938	32.8500
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000082	0.000106	0.0058
Thailand	Baht	0.019784	0.025517	1.3879
UAE	Dirham	0.211102	0.272279	14.8101
Euro	Euro	1.000000	1.289800	70.1561
Argentina	Peso	0.265519	0.342466	18.6278
Brazil	Real	0.283116	0.365163	19.8623
Denmark	Kroner	0.134265	0.173175	9.4195
India	Rupee	0.017754	0.022899	1.2455
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.204057	0.263193	14.3159
Mexico	New Peso	0.068594	0.088472	4.8123
New Zealand	Dollar	0.549557	0.708818	38.5547
Norway	Kroner	0.121698	0.156966	8.5379
Pakistan	Rupee	0.013061	0.016846	0.9163
South Africa	Rand	0.122700	0.158258	8.6081
Korea	Won	0.000763	0.000984	0.0535
Sweden	Kroner	0.109815	0.141639	7.7042
Syria	Pound	0.014936	0.019264	1.0478
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.024515	0.031619	1.7199

Shares fall 2.77%

From page B1

He said the market was keeping an eye on the Senate, which has been reluctant to pass the VAT reform measures sought by President Macapagal-Arroyo, who has warned that the country faces a fiscal crisis unless revenues were increased.

The weak performance of newly listed firms, SM Investments and Manila Water, after their successful initial public offerings (IPOs) earlier this month added to the negative tone, Canizares said.

Conglomerate SM Investments, the most actively traded stock, was down P5 at P230, extending its losses since its listing last week at P250. *AFP*

Capital flight seen to weaken peso

From page B1

not harm the Philippines much if investors would be assured of an improving local economy, considering that investors have been anticipating the US Fed's move.

Earlier, the BSP said portfolio investments are expected to reach as high as $2 billion this year from only $488.8 million last year. However, Buenaventura said the country's performance in attracting portfolio investments hinged largely on the government's ability to implement fiscal reforms.

Of the legislative proposals of the Arroyo administration aimed at reforming the fiscal sector, only the increase in "sin" taxes and the lateral attrition on revenue-generating agencies have been passed by Congress.

The proposal to reform the value-added tax system, by increasing its rate from 10 to 12 percent and to expand its coverage to include more products and services, is still facing rough sailing in Congress. The VAT reform plan is considered by the Arroyo administration as the most crucial since it will have the biggest revenue impact. The plan is expected to raise more than P60 billion in additional revenue a year.

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OPTIMISM ON ECONOMY

Manufacturing output up

By Michelle V. Remo

PRODUCTION by the manufacturing sector grew in January, indicating the business sector's optimism on the economy.

The National Statistics Office yesterday reported that the volume of production index (VoPI), which measures the volume of manufacturing output, posted a 5.5 percent year-on-year growth in January. The value of production index (VaPI), which is the amount of manufacturing output in peso terms, jumped by 15.7 percent in the same period.

"This shows that the economy still has growth momentum. It is performing modestly well considering all the pressures," said Scholastica Cororaton, head of the policy and planning division of the National Economic and Development Authority (Neda).

Cororaton said an increase in the production of the manufacturing sector indicated that industries were expecting an increase in demand in near term. She explained that this was partly due to the country's growing population.

The NSO said businesses that contributed to the increase in VaPI included furniture and fixtures (53.5 percent), publishing and printing (32 percent), and petroleum products (29.9 percent).

Industries that posted decline in VaPI were machinery (-27.8 percent), tobacco (-10.48 percent), and transport equipment (-3.3 percent).

In terms of VoPI, those that posted growth included beverage (21.3 percent), electrical machinery (9.4 percent), chemical products (7.4 percent), textile (12.6 percent), publishing and printing (27.8 percent), and furniture and fixtures (54.1 percent).

Businesses that posted decline in VoPI included tobacco (-28.7 percent), basic metals (-10.2 percent), transport equipment (-9.1 percent), and food manufacturing (-2.7 percent).

The NSO also reported that the volume of net sales slipped by 6.2 percent in January. But the value of net sales climbed 6.2 percent.

Cororaton said the lower sales in the first month of the year were caused by higher consumer prices, as inflation hit 8.4 percent in January. She noted, however, that despite the lower sales, businesses were keeping a positive outlook for the near term.

CAMPO VERDE TOWNSHIP.
Vice President Noli "Kabayan" de Castro (far right) is briefed by executives of Alsons Land and Sunfields Realty Development during the groundbreaking rites for "Campo Verde at Lima," the residential component of Lima Technology Center (LTC). With the Vice President are (from left) Sunfields president Manuel J. Colayco, Alsons Land chair Tomas I. Alcantara and Sunfields chair Noel S. Gonzales.

Gov't to form anti-cable TV piracy body

By Ronnel W. Domingo

THE INTELLECTUAL Property Office yesterday said it had teamed up with the National Telecommunications Commission in putting up a body dedicated to the fight against piracy of broadcast and cable television signals.

IPO Director General Adrian S. Cristobal Jr. said the creation of an intellectual property unit under the NTC would allow the investigation, upon receipt of complaint, of possible violations by cable TV and direct broadcast satellite operators of their licenses.

"This would intensify the government's drive against intellectual property rights violations in the broadcast media," Cristobal said.

The most common practice of cable TV and DBS piracy is done by consumers who buy descramblers to view cable or satellite TV channels for free.

Other ways of TV piracy include underdeclaration of subscribers by service providers to lower licensing fees; ad masking, which is a practice of service providers involving the sale of local advertising space over advertising already sold by the channel operator, and satellite overspill, which is done by pointing one's satellite dish in one area to a satellite and down-linking channels intended for operators in another area.

Reports show that in the Philippines, unauthorized access by users accounts for 77 percent of cable TV and DBS piracy.

The NTC is set to hold on Thursday a public hearing on its proposed memorandum circular that would create the IP unit.

For its part, the IPO has conducted a seminar to help the NTC build its capabilities to protect IPR.

Cristobal said the NTC-IPU was the latest beneficiary of IPO's capability building program that supports government agencies that need to enhance their legal and technical abilities to protect IPR.

Earlier, the IPO helped the Bureau of Customs in strengthening border control regulations, which resulted in the creation of an IP unit.

NTC urged to probe 2 cable TV operators

Clarissa S. Batino

THE LOPEZ-CONTROLLED SkyCable has asked the National Telecommunications Commission to investigate two major cable operators in Metro Manila for alleged piracy and signal theft.

SkyCable chair Eugenio Lopez III asked the NTC to investigate Destiny Cable Inc. and the Cable Link Group for alleged piracy.

Also, the Motion Pictures Association, a global group representing mostly American filmmakers, had asked the NTC earlier to penalize Destiny Cable for violations of intellectual property rights.

Destiny Cable, controlled by Elena Lim of the Solid Group, merged with Global Cable Inc., owned by Filipino and Taiwanese Investors. The surviving entity is Destiny Cable.

Cable Link is a dominant cable TV operator in Las Piñas, Parañaque and Muntinlupa. It is controlled by the Merilleno family.

SkyCable is the trade name of Central CATV Inc. It merged earlier with Home Cable to form the biggest cable television firm called Beyond Cable.

Lopez furnished the commission a list of programs, which, according to him, "have not been authorized for distribution on cable in the Philippines" but were being run by the two operators.

"We trust that the NTC will be able to level the playing field in the cable TV industry by putting an end to the rampant piracy, which, if left unchecked will have negative consequences on the development of CATV," the SkyCable chair wrote NTC chair Ronald Solis.

Lopez commended the NTC for creating a unit that would probe violations of intellectual property rights. The commission said the IPO unit it had created would focus on stamping out piracy in the cable TV industry.

Destiny and Cable Link are allegedly running more than 30 pirated programs.

Among these are Discovery Travel and Adventure, ABC Asia Pacific, China Television, NDTV India, RAI, Fashion TV, Hollywood, Pinoy Box Office, Channel V, Eclipse, and several movie channels.

Solis earlier said that the Motion Pictures Association had complained that Destiny had been airing movies not covered by any commercial agreement.

But the NTC chief said his office would have to ask the court whether the commission has the jurisdiction to decide on cases involving violations of intellectual property rights.

"The NTC has an understanding with the IPO to assist in the enforcement of the IPR Laws here. But since cable is the medium of piracy in this case, we will be asserting our jurisdiction," the NTC chief said.

More and more cable firms are planning to use set-up boxes to prevent theft. The equipment would ensure that the cable signals could not be pilfered.

Signal theft deteriorates the quality of service of cable operators from which the signals were illegally tapped.

Beyond Cable started installing the set-up boxes, which were purchased using a $30-million loan secured by ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp. last year.

SkyCable said it has more than 260,000 legitimate subscribers in Metro Manila and the illegal customers are almost twice that.

Tony Selda, president of the Philippine Cable Television Association, said that of the 2 million cable television subscribers in the country, only about a million to half-a-million were legitimate.

Malampaya stake sale transparent, says PNOC

PHILIPPINE National Oil Co.-Exploration Corp. said the prospective sale of 49 percent of its 10-percent interest in the Malampaya natural gas exploration and development project "has followed a strict and transparent process."

PNOC-EC president and chief executive officer Eduardo V. Mañalac said the selling price would be made public in due time.

He explained that a premature disclosure of the price could unduly prejudice the divestment process.

Mañalac said the prospective sale price could not yet be disclosed because the two other service contractors—Shell Philippines Exploration BV (SPEX) and Chevron-Texaco Malampaya Ll. (CTMLL)—"are now in the process of reviewing the offer and would have to decide whether or not to match it."

A South Korean consortium, led by LG International, has offered to acquire close to half of PNOC-EC's participating interest in the project. Members of the consortium are Korea Gas Corp., Seoul City Gas Co. and Daesung Industrial Corp.

Mañalac earlier clarified that the national government's 60 percent annual share in the net revenue of the current consortium of service contractors would not be affected by PNOC-EC's partial divestment.

MAÑALAC

The possible entry of a minority fourth group into the consortium has no bearing at all on the prospective earnings of the government from this project, he stressed.

Mañalac also pointed out that the partial divestment process "has been going on for over two years now under the strict oversight of the Cabinet-level committee on privatization."

Despite the long-drawn process, Mañalac explained that the prospective sale to the LG consortium "is not yet a done deal." We have to wait for the next move of SPEX and CTMLL, he said.

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COCKTALES

Victor C. Agustin

FE GLORIA, the longest and the lone career commissioner at the Securities and Exchange Commission, is now on a holdover capacity, her term having had expired on March 11.

Depending on who you talk to, Gloria is either eligible for reappointment or not. The contrary view, incidentally, is being subscribed to by fellow commissioner Jesus Martinez, who lately has actively resumed his gadfly role, to the discomfiture of his four all-women colleagues, including SEC Chair Fe Barin.

Gloria has put in 14 years as commissioner, and, on April 11, she will have served the government and the SEC, her first and only home, for 33 years. She started out in the corporate regulatory agency as a research attorney shortly before Martial Law.

Because of the breadth and depth of her institutional memory, Gloria has found support from Barin, another career official transported from the Bangko Sentral, who is proceeding on the assumption that the new SEC law allows her reappointment.

The contrary view, on the other hand, is that Malacañang has already started a search for Gloria's replacement and that the following are being considered: former finance undersecretary Grace Tan, SEC general accountant Roberto Manabat, and Raul Palabrica, the INQUIRER readers' advocate.

Should she fail to get reappointed, Gloria might have to content herself to go back to the academe and teach, perhaps the only job she could take on, other than those of eleemosynary positions.

Luckily, her reported P18-million retirement package should help to tide her over, until the corporate regulator presumably moves over to the regulated side.

When, and even before, that time comes, the blue-chip companies should be falling all over themselves to take on Gloria even as a consultant. After all, it's about time that SEC lobbyist Amado "Boy" Santiago got some competition.

Standardization

TODAY supposedly has been swallowed by the Manila Standard in their recent merger. Judging from the heat he is taking from the Standard union, Today publisher and Makati Rep. Teodoro Locsin Jr. appears to be the victor, rather than the vanquished.

According to the grapevine, Locsin has been given carte blanche to reorganize the editorial side of Manila Standard Today, as the merged daily is now called, and he is consequently bringing in a total of 23 Today staffers, up from the rumored eight, to displace an equal number of Standard heads.

Today had about 140 employees, premerger, while Standard had over a hundred.

Money-go-round

● AYALA Corp. treasurer Delfin Lazaro chose the worst of time, Holy Week, to unload company shares he had obtained as part of Ayala's industry-setting stock option plan. The former energy secretary dumped 74,000 Ayala shares at P7.70 each on Holy Tuesday, out of the more than 3.39 million shares he acquired only last month.

Despite the bad timing, Lazaro already more than doubled his money, having acquired nearly 1.6 million of those shares at P3.09 each.

● Taipan heir Alfonso Yuchengco Jr. has completely cut off business ties with his elder female siblings, resigning even from the RCBC bank board. His position has been taken over by his *ate*, Helen Y. Dee, now the undisputed empress of the Yuchengco empire.

Heard through the grapevine

NEW MANILA Golf Club president Ferdinand Martin Romualdez is meeting with past MGC presidents to discuss the fate of two businessmen-members and their two guests who were said to have erased and improved their scores in the recent Golden Tee tournament.

The caddies have already admitted to having witnessed the scandalous behavior in what supposedly is, or used to be, Manila's top gentlemen's club. *(Email cocktales_pdi@pldtdsl.net or cocktales_pdi@yahoo.com)*

More workers worldwide are hired, retained in '04

By Ronnel W. Domingo

INDEPENDENT companies in the Philippines are among the firms worldwide that hired and retained more workers last year amid a shortage of skilled employees, a global poll showed.

Grant Thornton's 2005 International Business Owners Survey showed that 26 percent of the 6,000 respondents from 24 countries said they saw an increase in their workforce in the past year.

Grant Thornton is an international membership organization of independent businesses. Its local affiliate is consultancy firm Punongbayan & Araullo.

The group said that this year's result showed a threefold increase over the global average of 8 percent in 2004.

Among the Filipino respondents, 32 percent said the number of their employees grew last year.

Job seekers in India and Australia had the best opportunities in 2004. In India, 55 percent of business owners said they hired more. In Australia, 50 percent saw an increase in their workforce.

In the United States, 39 percent said their workforce grew, while 15 percent of those from Japan said the same.

Still, 12 percent of respondents from The Netherlands, 3 percent from Mexico and 2 percent from Sweden said their organizations shrank.

Also, the business owners said that while employment figures were up, the shortage of skilled workers was a big constraint on the expansion of their operations.

With a tight labor market, half of all business owners say they are focusing more on attracting and retaining staff.

This was felt most acutely in the country as 92 percent of Filipino respondents said they were bent on attracting and retaining staff.

The same goes for firms in India, with 80 percent, Mexico, with 75 percent and South Africa, with 71 percent.

Andrew Godfrey, head of Grant Thornton's international and European services, said the shortage of a skilled workforce indicated a strengthening demand and the tightening of the labor market in many countries. He added this was consistent with the upward phase of the economic cycle.

"In India and South Africa, where there is a healthy economic environment, this need is particularly acute," Godfrey said. "However, the converse applies in Singapore and some European countries, like Italy and France, where workforce skills are not seen as such a big issue."

Asked about factors they thought were important in attracting and retaining staff, 84 percent of respondents said it was a good corporate reputation; 77 percent said an understanding of core values, and 69 percent said it was coaching, training and mentoring top-performing workers.

Neda says fare hike will raise inflation

By Clarissa S. Batino

INFLATION could go up slightly if the government would grant petitions of transport groups to raise the minimum fare by about 54.5 percent, or by P3, to P8.50 for the first 4 kilometers, based on estimates of the National Economic and Development Authority.

The National Statistical Coordination Board, for its part, said that prices would rise by 0.4 percent on the average with a P3-fare hike.

Cost of production would increase by 0.6 percent and the cost of household consumption would go up by 0.9 percent, the NSCB added in its recent study.

Scholastica Cororaton, head of the Neda's policy and planning division, said a fare hike would have some impact on inflation.

Every time the inflation rate goes up, the peso buys a lesser amount of goods, she said.

According to Cororaton, the Neda is looking at an inflation rate of 8.5 to 8.7 percent in March against 8.5 percent in February.

The central bank expects inflation to average between 6.7 percent and 6.9 percent this year as crude oil prices continue to go up.

As a rule-of-thumb, she said, every 1-percent increase in transport fares would tend to jack up inflation—or the rate at which prices of goods and services go up—by 0.017 percent.

A P3 fare hike sought by transport groups would mean a 54.5 percent increase which, using the Neda's rule-of-thumb, could translate to almost a 1-percent increase in the consumer price index.

The NSCB said that if a household spends about P200 a day, a 0.9 percent increase would mean an additional P1.80 in its expenditures.

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Balance of power at SMC seen to stay unchanged

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

THE BALANCE of power in Southeast Asia's largest food and beverage firm, San Miguel Corp., may remain unchanged as SMC's P17.8 billion stock rights issue draws to a close, according to analysts.

Analysts said all SMC shareholders would likely participate in the stocks rights exercise. Japanese brewer Kirin Brewery Co. Inc. and retail and tourism holding firm SM Investments Corp. earlier announced that they would keep their respective stakes in SMC.

SMC is currently holding the stocks rights offer to raise capital for its aggressive bid to be one of Asia Pacific's top ten companies.

The stocks rights issue will end on March 31.

The balance of power may remain unchanged between the two biggest shareholders in SMC—the government and SMC chair Eduardo Cojuangco Jr.

Cojuangco's reported ally, Kirin Brewery of Japan, acquired an additional 117.27 million class B shares of SMC last January, increasing its 15.6 percent interest to 19.7 percent.

Kirin currently controls two board seats in SMC. The acquisition of a few more shares would have entitled the Japanese brewer to a third seat.

SM Investments, said to be another ally of Cojuangco, holds a board seat and is prepared to shell out P1 billion to keep its 5.4 percent stake.

SMIC is controlled by the group of mall tycoon Henry Sy Sr.

As of Dec. 31, shareholders of SMC include the Presidential Commission on Good Government, which has the Coconut Industry Investment Fund (CIIF) on tap, the Government Service Insurance System and the Social Security System.

The CIIF accounts for 25.48 percent of the government's total SMC holdings. GSIS has a 6.29-percent stake in SMC, while the SSS has a 5.25-percent stake.

Companies linked to Cojuangco, led by Primavera Farms, control 19.21 percent.

Around 22.8 percent are held by private shareholders.

Jojo Gonzales, research head at Philippine Equity Partners, said that even if there were shareholders who would not fully exercise their right to buy additional SMC shares, the food and beverage giant could still raise P17.8 billion.

"The SMC Retirement Fund said they will take all unsubscribed rights," Gonzales said. "That means SMC is assured of full proceeds."

SMC is raising P17.8 billion through the issuance of 285 million additional shares. SMC is offering, by way of preemptive right, 173.4 million class A common shares at P54.70 a share and 111.2 million class B shares from the treasury stock at P74.74 apiece.

The additional shares to be issued represent roughly 10 percent or 284.6 million shares out of San Miguel's 2.846 billion total outstanding shares. Existing shareholders may first subscribe to the shares through what is called a preemptive right.

Finance Secretary Cesar Purisima earlier said the PCGG was not keen on tapping government financial institutions to maintain the level of its stake.

The finance chief said GFIs that were keen on helping either by lending or buying the shares would have to take the initiative on their own and evaluate their own risks..

MEMBERS of a diabetic club burn it out on a weekend morning.

Operation Diabetes: Nipping a killer disease in the bud

By Tina Arceo-Dumlao

HERBCARE Corp. could have sat back and watched sales of its Charantia ampalaya products grow with the increase of diabetes cases in the Philippines.

But as Herbcare learned more about what diabetics go through as they cope with their disease, it realized that it was not enough to just sell products that work. They should do more.

For Herbcare, doing more meant launching in October 2001 Operation Diabetes, a nationwide public service program to help diabetics, especially those from the middle class, lead fruitful lives and prevent others from developing the ailment.

The Department of Health estimates that there are about eight million Filipinos suffering from diabetes. But Herbcare believes that there may be millions more who have not been diagnosed but are, in fact, diabetics.

Diabetes is ranked as among the top 10 killer diseases in the Philippines, due to its many complications, such as major organ failures.

Misconceptions

Run jointly with the Association of Municipal Health Officers of the Philippines—the national medical organization of over 1,500 doctors running the country's health centers—Operation Diabetes started out as an education campaign in communities covered by Amhop doctors.

"There are many misconceptions about diabetes, and there are many who have the symptoms, but think they are suffering from another disease," said Herbcare president Lito Abelarde. "We try to help by informing people in the communities about what the disease is, its symptoms, and how to prevent it."

Taking it a step further, Operation Diabetes sponsored an early detection program.

Residents are given free blood sugar screening in public health centers to see if they are at risk, or are already diabetic. The centers do the test, while Herbcare provides the glucometers, test strips and lancets needed for the test.

The final component of the program is the organization of diabetic clubs that act as support groups for diabetics.

Depressed

"One of the problems of diabetics is they get depressed," Abelarde told INQUIRER in an interview. "They think there is no hope because of the disease. But through the diabetic clubs, the patients help each other stick to their diet and exercise plan. It also makes it easier for doctors to do their follow-up work."

The diabetic clubs also help the patients manage the disease by providing them with things to do such as aerobics and dancing, diet plans, as well as free diabetes bulletins and health care tips.

Herbcare's Charantia is the official food supplement.

Abelarde said that diabetes is usually brought on by genetics and a sedentary lifestyle. Lack of exercise, bad eating habits, and high stress levels usually accelerate the onset of the disease, particularly for those with a family history of high blood sugar levels.

Latest techniques

Supplementary activities to Operation Diabetes include training municipal doctors on the latest techniques in diabetes management, and organizational skills in running diabetes clubs.

The Leaders for Health Foundation Inc. is helping by conducting workshops on diabetes, including diagnosis, complications and proper regimen.

Operation Diabetes also sponsors the Alamin ang Diabetes, a 30-minute educational TV program that features facts about the disease, and tips on how to control and prevent it.

In the almost four years since Operation Diabetes was launched, over 80 diabetes clubs have been fully organized servicing over 5,000 diabetics, with 160 more in the pipeline.

The program organizers also hope to put up 500 more clubs by the end of next year, Abelarde said.

Amhop members also used the Operation Diabetes community-based model to launch similar programs to tackle asthma and malnutrition.

Total health care

"I personally find great satisfaction in being involved in this project of providing total health care," Abelarde said. "Having a good product is essential, but delivering it in a way that would really help them is even better."

Operation Diabetes has made such an impact on the diabetics that the Department of Health has come to endorse it. Health officials said that the program helped diabetics cope with the disease by empowering the patients to assume an active role in their own health care and in the prevention of the disease.

The World Health Organization recognizes the gravity of the disease that it is diverting some of its focus away from tuberculosis and family planning to diabetes control.

According to Abelarde, Herbcare is committed to helping in the effort to manage diabetes.

It not only allows the company to make a difference in the lives of the people it serves, he said, but it also gives Herbcare another reason for being. It calls on other companies to help in the effort to help manage and prevent diabetes.

"I have learned from this program that it is possible to do business in a genuinely caring manner, and that doing so is actually good for the business," Abelarde said.

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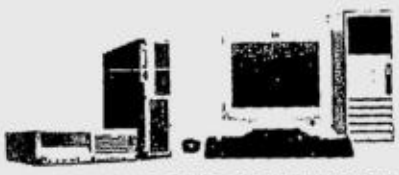

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Japan jobless rate up in Feb; patchy recovery seen

TOKYO—Japan's jobless rate rose in February while household spending fell, government data showed on Tuesday, highlighting the patchy nature of the economy's recovery from last year's recession.

The seasonally adjusted unemployment rate was 4.7 percent, higher than the market's median forecast and the previous month's reading of 4.5 percent.

The rate had been declining since it hit a record 5.5 percent in January 2003, although analysts said the news was not all bad.

"Unemployment is up but the number of unemployed people is still declining," said Seiji Adachi, senior economist at Deutsche Securities.

"Given the rapid improvement in the jobs market, it's not surprising to see a pause," he said.

The jobs-to-applicants ratio for February was 0.91, meaning 91 jobs were available per 100 applicants, the same as the previous month.

A government official said he was unsure why the jobless rate rose in February, adding that it may not be a reflection of economic conditions.

"The recent trend is that when the economy worsens, the unemployment rate goes up, but when the economy improves, it does not necessarily go down," the official said.

An export-led recovery has bolstered profits at Japanese manufacturers over the past few years, and that in turn has helped boost employment.

However, economists have said that recent falls in the unemployment rate did not fully reflect actual conditions where full-time employees are being replaced by cheaper part-timers.

Some also say the improvement in business profits is being helped by companies' efforts to cut back on staff, and while such moves are seen easing lately, economists say this is the main reason incomes and household spending have been slow to rise.

Separate data on Tuesday showed average spending by Japanese wage earner households, a key gauge of personal consumption, was down a real 3.8 percent in February from a year earlier.

Wage earners' monthly spending per household was 301,372 yen ($2,809), down a real 4.1 percent from January on a seasonally adjusted basis.

"Wage earners' spending declined, but it's not that bad considering the effects of the leap year last year," said Osamu Tanaka, economist at Morgan Stanley.

"Overall, personal consumption on a GDP basis will likely turn positive for the January-March quarter," he said.

The government also said the impact of last year's leap year may have affected the February data.

"Taken together with January, the trend is not too bad," a different government official said.

Another set of data showed retail sales fell 2.8 percent in February from a year earlier, the fastest drop since November 2003, compared with a decline of 2.9 percent forecast by economists in a Reuters poll.

Compared with January, retail sales fell 2.7 percent on a seasonally adjusted basis, the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry said.

Economists had expected retail sales to fall from the same month a year earlier, taking into account fewer Sundays for shopping this year than last year, which was a leap year.

In January, retail sales had risen 2.4 percent from a year earlier, the biggest year-on-year gain since March 1997, and jumped 4.6 percent from December. *Reuters*

ASIA-PACIFIC environment delegates attend the ministerial conference on environment and development for Asia-Pacific in Seoul. Asia-Pacific economies may be growing fast but growth will not be sustainable for much longer unless the region pays more of attention to the environment, a UN conference said Monday. AFP

Crude oil futures slip, but analysts don't see freefall

SINGAPORE—Oil prices dropped below $54 on Tuesday, maintaining a downward trend generated by profit-taking over the past week. But analysts said demand remained high and that a free-fall was unlikely.

Light, sweet crude for May delivery on the New York Mercantile Exchange fell 24 cents to $53.81 a barrel, midmorning in Asia. An intra-day high of $57.60 was set on March 17.

Heating oil prices fell marginally on Tuesday to $1.5385 a gallon (3.8 liters).

The latest US government data showed US inventories of crude oil at 309.3 million barrels, or 8 percent above year ago levels, while gasoline supplies are at 217.3 million barrels, also 8 percent above year ago levels.

While the higher inventories could help ease prices, some analysts caution that the onset of the US summer driving season, as well as strong demand from China and other growing economies would probably keep prices high over the medium term.

"I don't think we can read too much into it," analyst Esa Ramasamy said of the recent price drop. He noted that traders had just returned from the Easter weekend holiday.

"When the market goes on a long weekend, people tend to take long positions," said Ramasamy, a Singapore-based oil editorial manager for Platts, an energy reporting agency. "When people get back into the business, they will start to reevaluate the market."

He said shifts in oil prices could fluctuate between 50 cents and $1 for a while, but said a drastic drop was highly unlikely.

The Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries said this past weekend that the group will take its time in increasing output quotas by an additional 500,000 barrels per day due to global petroleum market fluctuations.

Opec agreed earlier this month to raise production quotas by 500,000 barrels per day and said it would consult on whether to increase them by a further 500,000 if prices continued to rise. *AP*

S.Korea output down in Feb.

SEOUL—South Korean factory output posted its sharpest drop in seven years in February, data showed on Tuesday, sparking concerns a recovery in the economy may not be as strong as touted by the government.

A big rebound in wholesale and retail sales last month, released at the same time as the output figures, provided more backing for government optimism local demand was recovering from a two-year slump, but was given short shrift by investors.

Government bond prices soared and stocks fell, while the country's top business lobby group forecast a fall-off in key exports of semiconductors and autos in the second quarter.

Factory output fell a faster-than-expected 4.6 percent in February from January, the National Statistical Office said.

The seasonally adjusted output reading marked its biggest drop in seven years and was far weaker than a median forecast in a Reuters poll for a 0.6 percent fall.

Economists said the output data must have been distorted by the Lunar New Year holidays, which fell in February this year as opposed to January in 2004.

"The data was not so weak as to change our view that the economy has passed its worst point and we still expect a rebound in March, but the recovery will only be mild," said Lim Ji-won, an economist with JP Morgan Chase Bank. *Reuters*

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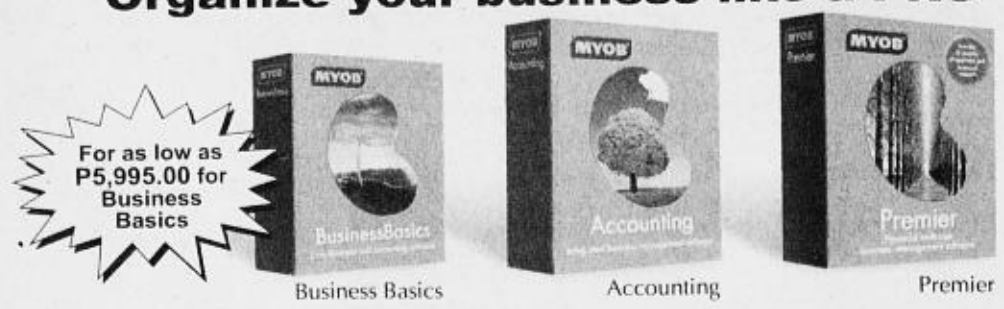

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Asian stock marts fall; Dollar rallies vs yen

SINGAPORE—Expectations of strong US jobs data put some muscle behind the dollar's rally, driving up expectations for more aggressive rate rises, but weak Japanese employment figures sapped Tokyo shares on Tuesday.

Other Asian stock markets fell, despite slight rises on Wall Street, as weak local economic data and earnings woes dampened investor enthusiasm.

Profit-taking hit US crude oil futures, as speculators who'd bought oil betting on prolonged dollar weakness sold positions. Easing concerns about US gasoline supplies also weighed on prices, traders said.

"The mood is turning cautious here ahead of the industrial output data tomorrow, followed by (the Bank of Japan's) tankan corporate survey on Friday," said Masatoshi Sato, senior strategist at Mizuho Investors Securities.

"The bond market had factored in a deterioration in February data, or what seems like a reaction to strong numbers up until January, with the bond yield falling below 1.4 percent from 1.5 percent. But the stock market had not," he said.

By the close of morning trade, the Nikkei was down 0.61 percent to 11,720.77.

MSCI's index of non-Japanese Asian share markets was also off 0.6 percent by 0230 GMT, led by a 1 percent drop on Hong Kong's Hang Seng index to its lowest level since late January.

Exporters gave up gains made on the dollar's recovery. Sony Corp. lost 1.6 percent. Hitachi was off 1.18 percent.

Japanese government bond (JGB) prices were little changed.

Unemployment in Japan rose to 4.7 percent in February, against the market's consensus forecast for 4.5 percent, which would have been unchanged from January.

Across the Pacific, the closely watched US payrolls report, due on Friday, is expected to show that 220,000 new jobs were created in March, down from 262,000 in February.

The Fed suggestion in its post-meeting statement last week that it might raise rates more aggressively if inflation heats up has supported the dollar.

At 0310 GMT the dollar bought around 107.03 yen after touching 107.38, a level not seen since October.

Traders said last-minute buying by Japanese importers ahead of the fiscal year-end on Thursday also supported the dollar.

The euro traded around $1.2942 versus $1.2897 in late US trade and off a six-week low of $1.2857 hit on Monday.

NYMEX May crude futures were down 38 cents at $53.67 a barrel on thin volume, while spot gold was also drifting lower, trading around $426.75 in Asia versus $425.90 in New York.

Falls on Hong Kong's Hang Seng Index were led by Chinese mobile phone giants China Unicom and China Mobile, which sank 4 and 2.3 percent respectively.

Unicom surprised the market after its last trading session with a 9 percent drop in quarterly profit.

Seoul shares fell 1.5 percent, hurt by weaker-than-expected factory output data that encouraged profit-taking in several index heavyweights, such as LG Electronics Inc., which fell 1.46 percent.

Australia's S&P ASX 200 lost 0.67 percent, Singapore's Straits Times Index slipped 0.18 percent and Taiwan's weighted index was off 0.82 percent. *Reuters*

Greenberg to retire as AIG chief, ends 40-year career

WASHINGTON—Maurice "Hank" Greenberg will retire this week as chair of American International Group Inc., ending a four-decade career with the insurance company as regulators investigate questionable financial transactions that occurred during his tenure.

In a letter sent through his attorney, Greenberg told AIG directors Monday that he would retire when he returns from a trip to Asia and Europe, and won't stand for election as a director when his term expires in May.

The company released the letter late Monday and said lead director Frank G. Zarb would assume the duties of chair until a new one is selected.

"In order to lead meaningful changes in the industry and at AIG, the company and its officers and directors must resolve any outstanding questions or issues and move forward," according to the letter from Greenberg's attorney, David Boies, to Richard Beattie, who represents AIG's independent directors. Greenberg had been at the company's helm for nearly four decades.

There had been widespread speculation about how long New York-based AIG would continue its relationship with Greenberg, as investigations by the Securities and Exchange Commission and New York State Attorney General Eliot Spitzer have intensified in recent weeks.

Greenberg, 79, was replaced as chief executive two weeks ago—though retained as chair—as scrutiny mounted over a 2000 transaction that appeared to have been used to boost the company's reserves artificially. *AP*

PEOPLE at WORK

E-mail: peopleatwork@inquirer.com.ph

Editor Raul O. Marcelo
Subsection Editor Regina Galang Reyes

Text us your feedback: inquirer paw name/age/city/message to 2207 (Globe) or 283 (Smart)

Does a college degree prepare you for your desired career?

By Alwin Macalalad and Gina Hechanova
Contributors

ILLUSTRATION BY LA MISTADES

IN THE COMING weeks, thousands of college students will triumphantly don their togas, march to their school hymns, and go up the stage to receive their diplomas. These final steps will take them to the so-called "real life." They have finally earned a college degree, which they view as a necessary tool to progress in life.

But to what extent do college degrees prepare our youth for their desired careers? To answer this question, People at Work surveyed readers to find out whether or not their jobs were related to their courses. Seventy persons answered our survey. They graduated from various courses—business management, engineering, communication, agriculture, education and others.

Current jobs

When asked whether their current job was related to their college course, a slight majority (51 percent) of the respondents said that their current jobs are not related to their college courses. The respondents were also asked what were their top reasons for choosing their current line of work. The top responses were: 1) financial needs and the rewards to be gained in the choice of work, 2) future career opportunities and the availability of preferred career paths, and 3) personal growth and fulfillment. Others considered their own talents and expertise in choosing their work. Others stated their desire to serve the people and the country. Still others were constrained by a lack of employment options—any job is better than none at all.

Choices

Not surprisingly, of those who had jobs that were unrelated to their college course, more than three-fourths (78 percent) of them said that they would rather have work related to their undergraduate degrees. Why the discrepancy? Although the data gathered was not enough to yield significant differences, there are some points worth mentioning. Those whose jobs are related to their undergraduate courses prioritized personal growth and fulfillment and skills and competency development. However, those whose jobs were not related to their college courses cited financial reward and lack of employment options as reasons for their job choice.

College course

How did these graduates choose their undergraduate course? Respondents ranked dreams and ambitions highest in their reasons for choosing a college course. Future employment advantages ranked second. The expectations of others (i.e., parents, relatives, friends) ranked as third among their grounds in choosing courses. A few others mentioned the affordability and popularity of college courses as additional considerations. However, a few more add that they either lacked knowledge regarding available college courses, were undecided, or had no choice at all.

PEOPLE AT WORK Pulse

Value of college

Respondents agree that most of all, college studies gave them the general skills that they needed to handle their present line of work. Their years in college also gave them the personal preparation and internal motivation for their present-day professions. For many (especially those whose jobs are related to their college courses), their undergraduate training gave them the initial technical expertise for their current jobs. For some, college gave them the formality of having a degree diploma.

Interestingly, there appears to be great value placed in continuing education. Of all the respondents, 46 percent have already taken further studies and another 46 percent are planning to. There is trust in education and its power to improve quality of life.

Given the poor economy and high rate of unemployment, it is not too surprising that many college graduates take the pragmatic road and choose whatever job comes their way. However, in the long run, will these people be truly happy and productive? The results thus suggest that today's youth may need better guidance in choosing their courses and in searching for jobs that will be aligned to their interests.

Those whose college courses do not match their current line of work also view the years spent in college as valuable in preparing them for work. The interest in getting even more education is also a testimony to perhaps the greatest value of education—to instill the importance of continuous learning. As a famous educator Robert Hutchins said, "The object of education is to prepare the young to educate themselves throughout their lives."

(Mr. Macalalad is a graduate student in the Ateneo de Manila Department of Psychology. Dr. Hechanova is a faculty member of Ateneo and the director for Research and Organization Development of Ateneo CORD. For feedback about this articles please e-mail ateneocord@admu.edu.ph.)

The value of a career coach/mentor

PEOPLE AT WORK Pulse

PEOPLE at Work and the Ateneo Center for Organization Research and Development (CORD) partner to listen to the heartbeats of working people through this People at Work Pulse.

This "pulse" check will be conducted once a month. The results of this poll will be published the following month. To quicken your response rates, Philippine Daily Inquirer and Ateneo CORD will be giving gift packages to two respondents to be drawn from those who replied for the month. Winners from the respondents of last month's survey are **Jose B. Dado** and **Marlyn G. Necesito** (please contact Ateneo CORD to claim your prizes).

1. In your years of working, have you ever had a person/s you consider to be your mentor/s?
_____ Yes _____ No (If no, go to question number 6)
2. If yes, how many mentors have you had? _____
3. How many of these mentors were men/women? Men ____ Women ____
4. How did you establish your relationship with your mentor/mentors? (choose any that applies)
a. I asked him or her to be my mentor
b. He or she volunteered to be my mentor
c. It just happened—we have/had the same working style, work ethic, interests, values, etc.
5. Were any of these mentors (choose all that applies):
a. A direct supervisor
b. A supervisor other than your direct boss
c. A member of top management
d. A coworker or peer
e. A subordinate
6. Rank the following from 1 to 9 (where 1= most important) according to the most important thing that a mentor did/can do for you?
a. Give advise on career direction or development
b. Help develop my skills (whether management, technical, or interpersonal skills)
c. Serve as a role model
d. Direct me to become more efficient and effective at my job
e. Listen to my professional and personal problems
f. Monitor and give feedback on my performance
g. Challenge me in taking new projects or assignments
h. Help me establish professional contacts
i. Give encouragement
7. Is there a formal mentoring or coaching program in your organization? _____ Yes _____ No (If no, would you like a program like this in your organization? _____ Yes _____ No)

Name: _____
Gender: _____ Age: ____ Position: _____
Nature of Job: _____
Company Name: _____
Industry: _____ No. of years working: _____
Tel/Mobile/E-mail: _____
Mail or fax this form, e-mail or text your answers to:
People at Work Pulse, Ateneo Center for Organization Research and Development, 2nd flr. Hoffner Bldg., Social Development Complex, Ateneo de Manila University, Loyola Heights, Quezon City. Fax (632) 426-6065, e-mail ateneocord@admu.edu.ph or text answers to (0920) 831-9522. Write: topic 1.(answer), 2. (answer), etc. name, gender, status, position, company, address, contact numbers or e-mail.

What can you learn about yourself from online assessments?

WORKING WOUNDED

Bob Rosner

DEAR Readers: Plato said "Know thyself" and given all the free and inexpensive assessments available today on the web, it's never been easier to follow his advice. We talked to Margaret Dikel, the author of the first online job guide, The Riley Guide (rileyguide.com), about these online tools. Margaret has been reviewing online career resources for the last 10 years.

WW: What advice would you give to someone thinking about using online tests?

MD: First, let's call them assessment tools. "Test" usually gives the impression that there's a right answer and a wrong answer for each question. These tools only want you to learn about yourself.

WW: Who is best served by these assessment tools?

MD: Assessments are good for people considering a change, either in occupation or path as well as job seekers. In some cases, assessments can help someone who may be having a communication problem at work, but is otherwise happy in his or her job.

WW: What should you look for in a test?

MD: Look for authority and validity. Authority means that the person or organization who developed the tool has a background in psychology and/ or counseling. Validity means the tool has been tested on different populations to be sure it's useful. You'll see tools which say they are for a particular purpose. You'll also see many tools that are based on the work of John Holland, a pioneer in this field.

WW: Any warnings?

MD: While all of these tools can be used and the results understood by an individual, a counselor may be useful if you do not understand what you are reading or if you have more questions after reading the report than you did before taking the assessment. Also trust your gut. If you try a tool and the answer it gives you seems way off the mark, set it aside and try another one. Read privacy policies to be sure your answers or personal info will not be shared with others. Finally, understand how your results will be delivered: online, by mail, or even through an interpretive session with a counselor or trainer.

WW: What are your top five online tests?

MD: Skills Profiler (http://www.acinet.org/ acinet/ skills_-home.asp). Free. Great for persons entering the workforce, students considering potential careers, or persons considering a career switch. The Career Key (http://-www.careerkey.org/english/).Free. It measures skills, abilities, values, interests, and personality, identifying promising jobs and giving information about them. Keirsey Temperament Sorter (http://www.keirsey.com/). Free. Helps people understand their traits, motivations, and behaviors (simpler tool than Myers-Briggs). Non-English versions are also available. Self-Directed Search (SDS) (http: // www.self-directed-search. com). Cost is $9.95. The SDS helps you to identify careers that should be highly satisfying to you based on your skills and interests. Campbell Interest and Skill Survey (CISS) (http://www.pearsonassessments.-com/tests/ciss.htm). Cost is $17.95. It measures self-reported vocational interests, skills and rates a person's interest in specific occupational areas.

The best part of these tools is that you won't only learn a lot about yourself, you can have fun doing it.

Here are the results from a recent workingwounded.com/ ABCnews.com online ballot: What do you think of online assessments?

—source of valuable insight, 16.2 percent

—A waste of time, 27.5 percent

—It depends on the assessment, 56.2 percent

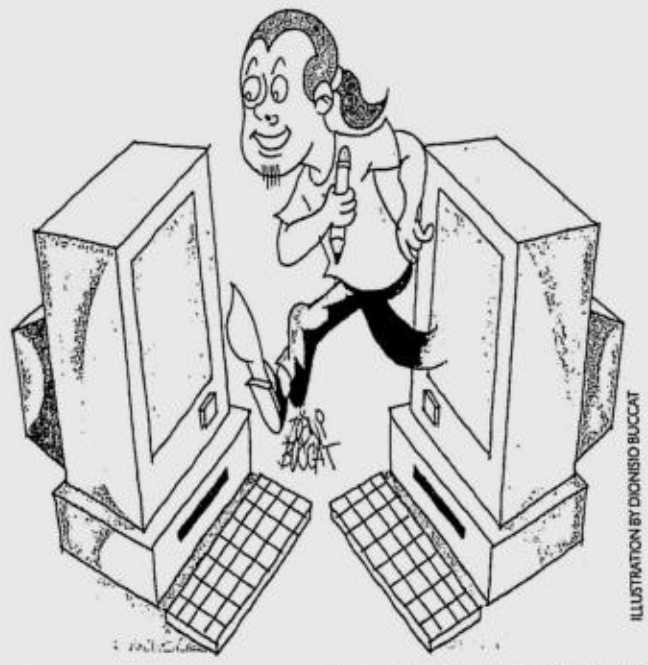


ILLUSTRATION BY DIONISIO BUCCAT

(Mr. Rosner, an internationally syndicated columnist, author and speaker, is based in Seattle, Washington, USA. E-mail him at bob@workingwounded.-com.*)*

Precious do-nothing moments

WORKING MOM

An Mercado Alcantara

BARBARA Walters hit it right on the head, as usual, when in an interview by Oprah Winfrey on the Oprah show, she raised a concern about the idea of quality time. She spoke about how as a working mom she tried her best to be present at all the important events in her daughter's life (even more present, her daughter vouched for her, than many of the less busy moms were). But looking back now, Barbara said, the idea of quality time may be misleading. It is not so much the important events that build bonds, she said, as the "do-nothing-moments together."

Said in the Barbara Walter's timbre, the observation sounded like a declaration: We all must have do-nothing time, she seemed to say. And she would have been right.

Memorable moments

Do-nothing moments is what we remember most about our childhood. That Typhoon Yoling all-night black out when, because we had nothing to do, mommy taught us to play gin rummy. That boring hot summer afternoon when, because we had nothing to do, mommy taught us to play *piko*. That rain-drenched Saturday when, because we had nothing to do, daddy led a march out the door to give us a taste of summer rain.

There's a work-life balance prescription in these do-nothing moments. Hidden in the frolic and the games is the willingness to let go of responsibility. That is not to say that we are to be irresponsible, but to say that we don't have to carry our responsibilities all the time.

Fun experts

In fact, when we shed our sense of responsibility, we can become more present to our children and to our self. Fun takes on a whole different meaning. In the corporate world, we hire team-building experts and training consultants to teach us to have fun again, to teach us the importance of spontaneity as the source of creativity. We working parents have it good—we have our fun experts right in our backyard, if only we can let go enough to let them teach us.

If you're still figuring out what to do with the kids this summer, plan on some do-nothing time. Don't be cowed by the threat of boredom. Instead of rushing them to yet another soccer game, pencil in some lie-around time. Instead of jumping into home chores as soon as you get home, punch in some floor time with your toddler. Instead of bringing stress home from work, plug in some de-stress time. As working moms, we've learned to simply shift from responsibility to responsibility; now we have to learn to simply shift down. Let the engine run idle.

There is, after all, much to learn and to gain from a dash out in the summer rain.

(An Mercado Alcantara is founding editor of Working Mom Magazine, published by ABS-CBN Publishing, Inc. Comments and questions are welcome at an_alcantara@abs.pi-noycentral.com.*)*

'I want to work outside the academe!'

By Tita Datu Puangco

Advice FOR THE ANXIOUS PERSON AT WORK

I HAVE been reading your column in PDI. I really appreciate all the advice that you have been giving to your letter senders. I am hoping that you can also help me with my problem regarding my professional growth.

My problem is that I want to work outside the academe. I have been teaching for almost six years already and I'm done with my masters degree. I have worked before in one of the "think tanks" of the government but my stay there was only for a year.

My work is very much related to my course but since I wanted to study, I resigned from my work. Somebody offered me a teaching position in one of the prestigious universities in the Manila so I took the opportunity. In short, I was teaching while I was pursuing my graduate studies. As an assistant professor today, I currently carry a full load of 24 units.

Now that I am done with my graduate studies, I would like to pursue a career outside the academe or at least simply teach part-time. I have sent out my curriculum vitae and letter of application to both government and private sectors but apparently, the feedback is that I am overqualified for the positions that I have been applying for.

The point is, I am very much willing to assume a lower position since I lack the necessary experience or the skills required of the job. But then, it seems that employers or people in the human resources department are afraid to take the risk of hiring me. I have attached my curriculum vitae for your evaluation.

I hope you could help me with my problem. I am interested in development work (nongovernment organizations, government work) and quantitative work (private sector).

Thank you so much for your advice.

Anxious for Experience

Thank you for your letter. I reviewed the resumé you sent. It is quite impressive what with a masters degree in Economics. Your field, however, is rather specialized. But this is no reason why you cannot land a good job whether in the government, NGO or private sectors.

First of all face reality. You have to apply for a position that does justice to your qualifications, instead of offering to start with a lower-paying job that is not aligned with your education and experience. Your situation requires a clear and focused placement strategy.

Target specific jobs

Let me tell you what kind of positions you can target for in the private sector. You can apply for a corporate planning or business development specialist position. Most large companies would have corporate planning and business development units, especially banks, insurance and other financial institutions. These units are found also in large consumer and energy companies, among others. Then, you can also try to apply with consulting companies that specialize in these areas.

Try filing applications with nongovernment organizations such as the Asian Development Bank and other similar institutions that issue regular economic analysis and forecasts? Definitely, they can use you capabilities in statistics and research.

Resumé makeover

May I suggest some steps for you to take as you go about job hunting? First, revise your resumé. Instead of a chronological employment presentation that you used in the resumé you sent me, go for a format that highlights your competencies. Your resumé today focuses a great deal on your teaching experience. Why not highlight the research projects that you have successfully completed? You can even put in a one or two statements describing each research project. This will provide a better perspective to the potential employer of your talents and competencies.

ILLUSTRATION BY DIONISIO BUCCAT

Second, change your career objective and make it more specific. Instead of simply saying "professional growth outside academe" why not say "professional growth in a job in strategic planning or business development."

Network and research

Third, try to examine your personal network. Inquire about possible openings in the companies where your friends and relatives work. Don't be shy. Spread the word around that you are interested to find a job that is in your line of expertise.

Fourth, you can also check out the top 500 companies. Go to their web sites, check out their organization strategy, structure, products and services. Ask yourself, would they need the skills I have to offer? Then you can customize your resumé to fit what they need. I am sure if you send a well written resumé, the human resource officer at the receiving end will give it a second look.

Adventure

Fifth, have patience and persistence. View the task of getting the right job as an adventure. Each time you send out your resumé, follow through. You may not land a job each time but the experience will give you valuable lessons.

Sixth, recognize that you are working from a position of strength. You have a job and you are in a position to choose your next career move. You have confidence and self-esteem that will work well for you when you go for interviews. Good luck and God bless!

By the way, Ancilla has a job opening for a creative person who is competent in web-based marketing to support our expansion program. I encourage our qualified readers to please send your resumé to our e-mail address.

(Ms Puangco is CEO and chair of Ancilla Enterprise Development Consulting. Send feedback through e-mail to advice@ancillaedc.com.ph *or fax to* 892-2902.*)*

What to do when competition gets in the way of relationships

By Dr. Tony Alessandra

YOU might be tempted to say: "What's wrong with a little competition?" Nothing's wrong with it. It's healthy. It's when your need to compete, and be superior to someone else, gets in the way of the best possible outcome for both of you—that's when competition becomes a liability.

I'm talking about the kind of person who always needs to be "one up" on other people. A person who lives his life in competition with everyone—and we all know someone like that—might get admired for his achievements, but he doesn't get the freely given attention and support of others. A person who exudes the message: "I'm smarter, or prettier, or richer, or more committed than you are" doesn't garner people's trust. That's because the message is clearly about "me first."

Not number one

A willingness to be flexible means that occasionally you're not number one. You may need to take a backseat to a colleague who's trying something innovative. It may mean that you'll need to compromise in a negotiation. Maybe the fact that you're the best salesperson of the month every month prevents other people from even trying.

Does your level of competitiveness get in the way of relationships? If you play a one-on-one sport such as tennis or racquetball, do you always play to win, to beat the other person? If you play board games or video games with your children, is it more important to win than to have fun?

On the one hand, it seems as though we're being pushed to be more competitive. Many of us work for companies that are in fierce marketing battles with global competition. There are fewer tax dollars to go around, fewer jobs in many industries. Yet the paradox is the solutions we're finding to those problems involve not more competition, but more collaboration.

ILLUSTRATION BY STEPH BRAVO

Collaborative selling

For years I've developed books and other materials for people in one of the most competitive arenas imaginable: selling. I've spoken to thousands upon thousands of dedicated salespeople who relish competition. Yet my message has been consistent: learn to approach the potential customer or client as a consultant. True professionals in sales, the ones who are successful in all respects, not just in dollars, are those people who focus more on helping than on selling, who listen more than talk, who problem-solve rather than persuade. These collaborative techniques create many more long-term customers than one-shot sales.

I don't teach 50 ways to close a sale. I teach a step-by-step consultative approach that allows both the customer and the salesperson to feel good about each other. When I discovered that selling didn't have to be a contest of getting you to buy my product or service, and that it didn't have to be that I either won or lost, I was relieved. I presented you with choices, helped you think through whether any of them was suitable for you and made sure you were satisfied if you did choose to buy. Whether you bought something or not, I had done my job. I didn't need to be the best salesman of the month. I just needed to meet my own goals and go to bed knowing I had done a thorough job of collaboration.

Not an opponent

I just have one tip for you if you have a streak of competitiveness that gets in the way of your relationships: stop seeing the other person as an opponent. Reframe the relationship as a mentoring one, as a friendship, as a chance to do something together that neither of you could do alone. Look directly into that person's eyes and see a fellow human being who doesn't want to be beaten, or made into a loser any more than you do. People who are always out to win may collect a lot of marbles, but they lose a lot of friends. And I'd trade a bag of marbles for a good friend any day.

(Copyright C 2005 by Tony Alessandra, used with permission. For feedback or information regarding Tony's products or services, please contact us at info@alessandra.com, www.alessandra.com *(800) 222-4883 or fax (760) 603-8010.)*

Gov't urges job seekers to strengthen skills, education

THE DEPARTMENT of Labor and Employment (DOLE) has underscored the need to strengthen workers' skills and education as mismatch between skills and jobs causes the growing unemployment rate.

Although January 2005 figures showed that employment grew by 0.3 percent or 31.634 million from 31.547 million last year, Labor and Employment Secretary Patricia A. Sto. Tomas said that the latest labor force survey of the National Statistics Office also showed that 43 percent (1.7 million) of the unemployed population have reached at most high school education, while 21.2 percent (855,000) have reached only elementary level.

"This would indicate that unemployment is basically a mismatch between skills and jobs, and it would do well for job seekers, including graduates, to develop suitable skills that would enhance their opportunities," Sto. Tomas said.

Employment boosters

The January 2005 survey also revealed that employment was boosted by the country's agriculture, fishery, forestry sector, which posted an employment increase of 1.7 percent (+185,000) offsetting the slight decreases registered in the services (-0.2 percent) and industry (-1.4 percent) sectors.

The services sector, however, remained the country's largest source of employment, accounting for 48.4 percent (or 15.298 million employed workers), Sto. Tomas said. It was followed by agriculture at 35.9 percent (11.359 million), and industry at 15.7 percent (4.977 million), giving the country a total 31.634 million employed population in January 2005.

DOLE optimistic

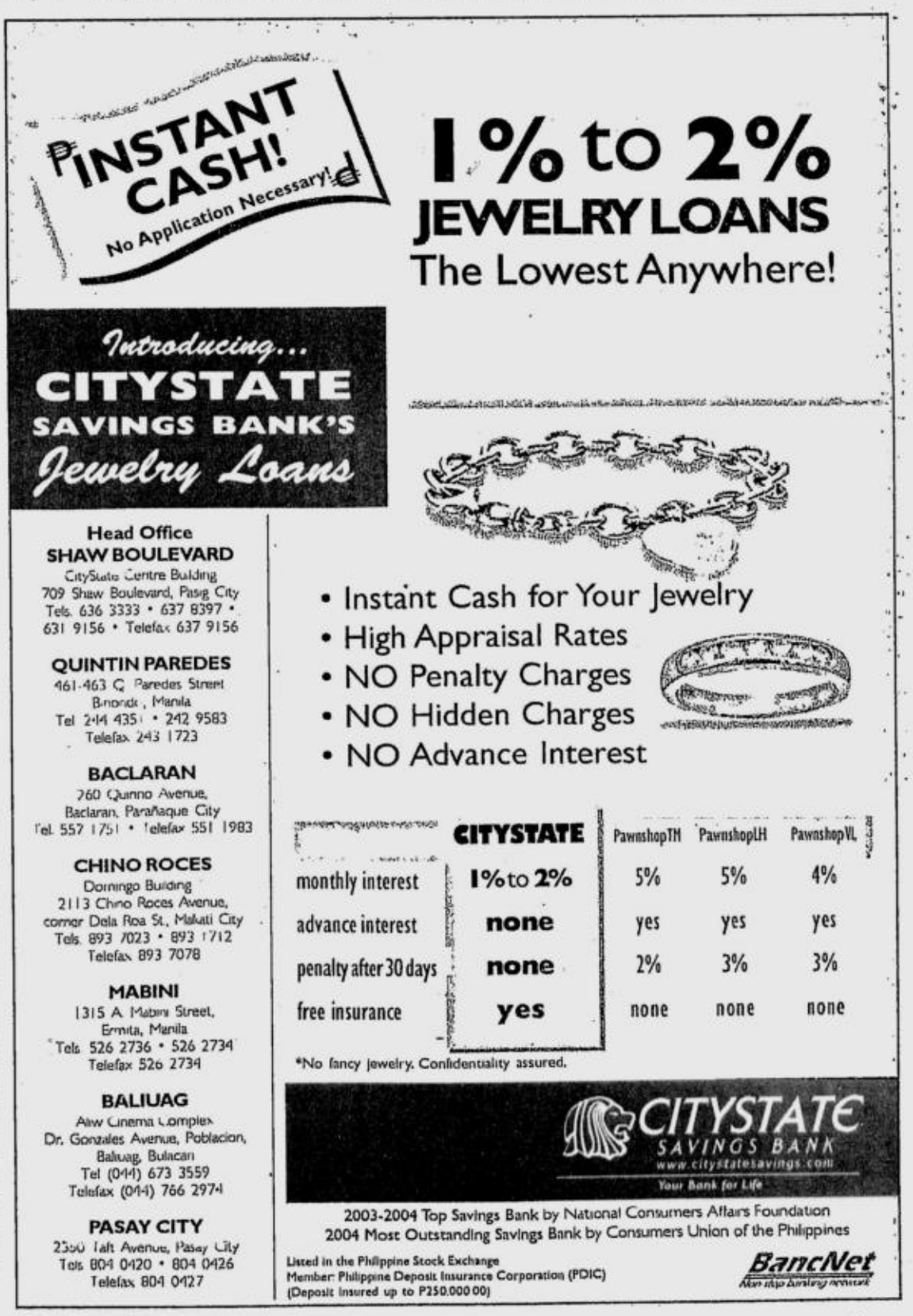
While mismatch between skills and jobs remains a problem, the DOLE was optimistic that it was right on track of its target of creating more jobs similar to what was achieved last year.

The more than 1,000 public employment service offices in various local government units and schools placed some 804,367 job seekers mainly in local jobs, complemented by the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration's and the legitimate private sector recruitment industry's deployment of some 933,588 overseas Filipino workers (OFW) in some 190 OFW-host countries worldwide.

Positive developments

Sto. Tomas said that as a result of continued promotion in both traditional and emerging overseas labor markets, inward OFW remittances helped strengthen the Philippine economy as these rose by a total 1.8 percent to $8.5 billion (around P467 billion) last year from $7.6 billion in 2003.

Complementing this, the DOLE's Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA), via the various training schools under its supervision, produced some 1.176 million graduates on in-demand technical education courses, and increased to 52 percent the certification rate of technical graduates last year, Sto. Tomas added. (*Source*: www.dole.gov.ph)



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"In Christ all shall be made alive..." **Corinthians 15:22**

Gloria Carangian de Villa

Loving wife and mother, now peacefully rests in the infinite Grace and Goodness of the Lord on the 24th of March at the age of 65.

Her husband **MAXIMO**; mother **SOFIA**; sisters **DORIS** and **PACITA** and brother-in-law **RAY** and children **Arnold, Dennis, Marissa, Mariela** and **Dindo**; and children-in-law **Mary Ann** and **Estela**; grandchildren **Nica, AJ, Erika** and **David**; niece **Terry** and children **Maria** and **Israel**; nephew **Emerson**, and other relatives and friends requests the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her remains lie in state at Our Lady of Peace in Antipolo City.

Interment will be on Wednesday, March 30, 2005 at the Our Lady of Peace Memorial Park, Antipolo City after the 10:30 a.m. Mass at the Gloria Heights Subdivision Chapel, Simeon Lacson Street.

Psalm 27:4

"One thing I ask of the Lord; this I seek:
To dwell in the Lord's house all the days of my life,
To gaze on the Lord's beauty ..."

Our Dearly Beloved

Clarita Cojuangco Centeno

of Hagonoy, Bulacan and Caloocan City peacefully joined our Lord on March 29, 2005 at the age of 91.

Her loving sisters Apolonia (Vancouver) and Adelaida (Los Angeles), nephews and nieces, grandchildren, great-grandchildren and other relatives request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her remains lie in state at the family residence in Sto. Niño, Hagonoy, Bulacan.
Interment will be at the Hagonoy Catholic Cemetery on Saturday, April 2, 2005 after the 1:30 p.m. Holy Mass at the National Shrine of St. Anne in Hagonoy.

We remember with deep love and affection
on his **First Death Anniversary**

BGen LEO J. SANTOS (Ret.)

April 11, 1928 - April 1, 2004

Masses willl be held in the following churches:

St. Ignatius Cathedral, (Camp Aguinaldo, QC) Daily: April 1 to April 12, 2005	7:00 AM
St. Joseph Church, (Camp Crame, QC) April 1, 2005	6:30 AM
Libingan ng Bayani Church (Fort Bonifacio, Makati) April 1, 2005	6:30 AM
Our Lady of Consolation Parish (Mira Nila QC) April 1, 2005	6:30 PM
St. Michael Church, Camiling, Tarlac April 1 and April 11, 2005	6:00 AM

His loving wife **Luz**; Children **Ma. Luisa** and **Resty, Anna Leah** and **Christian** and grandchildren **Michelle Ann, Mark Jonathan** and **Sarah Isabel** request you to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

"Come to Me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest."

Matthew 11:28

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SOCIAL SECURITY SYSTEM
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Visit the SSS website for Bid Invitations

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY & TO BID

INTERACTIVE VOICE RESPONSE SYSTEM & MAINTENANCE SERVICE FOR MINOLTA MICROFILM EQUIPMENT

The SOCIAL SECURITY SYSTEM is inviting bidders to apply for eligibility & to bid for the following items:

1. Supply, delivery and installation of an Interactive Voice Response (IVR) platform, which shall include the initial development and installation of the application system that will be used for the proposed IVR solution.

   This acquisition is aimed at enabling SSS to provide more quality service to its members through a state-of-art communication system. With the proposed IVR, SSS members can help themselves to fast and round-the-clock information about their membership status, and benefit and loan application status.

   Approved Budget for the Contract :
   - Hardware/Software : P 12,000,000.00
   - Three-year Maintenance : P 3,600,000.00

   Source of Fund :
   - Hardware/Software : Approved Budget for PABX and IVRS Upgrade
   - Three-year Maintenance : Operating Expenditures: MR – Computer Eqpt.

   Contract Duration : Sixty (60) calendar days after signing of the contract

2. Maintenance Service Requirements of SSS Minolta Microfilm Equipment and Peripherals, located in its various Offices and Branches.

   The aforementioned services are aimed at providing the SSS a preventive and proactive means of ensuring the reasonable level of performance of the said equipment.

   Approved Budget for the Contract : P 2,747,668.00
   Contract Duration : Two (2) years
   Source of Fund : MR – Furniture & Equipment

SCHEDULE OF ACTIVITIES

Particulars	Date	Venue
Issuance of Eligibility requirements	March 30, 2005 to April 13, 2005	BAC Secretariat, 6th Flr., SSS Main Bldg.
Deadline of submission of eligibility requirements • Item 1 • Item 2	 April 18, 2005 April 19, 2005	BAC Secretariat, 6th Flr., SSS Main Bldg.
Issuance of Bidding Documents to Eligible Bidders upon payment of a non-refundable fee as follows: • Item 1 – P 10,000.00 • Item 2 – P 1,000.00	 April 21, 2005 (Item 1) April 22, 2005 (Item 2)	BAC Secretariat, 6th Flr., SSS Main Bldg.
Pre-Bid Conference • Item 1 • Item 2	 April 29, 2005 2:00 p.m. April 29, 2005 2:30 p.m.	Bidding Room, 6th Floor, SSS Main Bldg.
Submission & Opening of Bids shall be announced and confirmed through a Bid Bulletin.		

For any inquiry, please call telephone numbers 922-2991 or 920-6401 local 5490/5491

This bidding shall be governed by the Implementing Rules and Regulations of Republic Act No. 9184, otherwise known as the "Government Procurement Reform Act."

The SSS reserves the right to reject any or all bids without offering any reason, to waive any formality or technicality, and to award to any bidder whose proposal is deemed most advantageous to the SSS. The SSS neither assumes any obligation for any loss whatsoever that may be incurred by the bidders in the preparation of their respective bids, nor does the SSS guarantee that an award will be made.

THE CHAIRMAN
BIDS & AWARDS COMMITTEE

(PDI - March 30, 2005)

PAMBANSANG PANGASIWAAN SA PAGKAIN
NATIONAL FOOD AUTHORITY

MATIMYAS BLDG., 101 E. RODRIGUEZ SR. AVE., QUEZON CITY
TEL. NO. (632) 712-3341 TO 54 FAX NO. (632) 712-1110 E-MAIL: www.nfa.gov.ph

ANNOUNCEMENT OF BIDDING

In consonance with R.A. 8976 otherwise known as the Philippine Food Fortification Act of 2000, the National Food Authority (NFA) as the implementing agency on iron fortified rice, wishes to announce that it will be conducting a bidding on April 28, 2005 at 10:00 AM at the NFA Boardroom, 10th Floor, Matimyas Bldg., 101 E. Rodriguez Sr. Avenue, Quezon City among all interested suppliers for the supply of THREE HUNDRED METRIC TONS (300 MT), MAXIMUM IRON COATED RICE GRAIN PREMIX with an approved budget of Php69.6 M, packed in twenty five (25) or fifty (50) kg capacity nitrogen or vacuum sealed laminated film bag as primary packaging and multi-walled paper used as secondary packaging (strong enough to withstand handling). Detailed product specifications shall be included in the Terms of Reference (TOR). Delivery period at designated NFA Manila warehouse/s shall be not later than 15 August 2005 and with BUYER'S option for an early delivery.

All interested suppliers are required to submit price offers in Philippine Currency, (inclusive of all taxes) as specified in the NFA Bid Form.

All bidders are required to post a bid bond equivalent to 5% of the approved budget of Php69.6 M in the form of Cash, Cashier's and/or Manager's Check or an irrevocable L/C issued by a reputable bank in Metro Manila.

List of Eligibility Requirements and Instruction to Bidders may be secured thru MR. TOMAS R. ESCAREZ, Assistant Department Manager and MR. NESTOR U. PUANGCO, Division Manager, Department for Marketing Operations, 5th Flr., NFA Matimyas Bldg., 101 E. Rodriguez Sr. Ave., Quezon City, Telephone Nos. 712-1564, 743-86-96 or 712-3341 Loc. 8513 starting March 30, 2005.

The Terms of Reference (TOR) and Bid Documents will likewise be available starting March 30, 2005 up to April 19, 2005 (8:00 AM-5:00 PM) upon payment of a Php15,000.00 non-refundable fee.

The **Pre-Bidding** conference will be held on **April 14, 2005, at 10:00 AM** at the NFA Boardroom, 10th Floor, Matimyas Bldg., 101 E. Rodriguez Sr. Avenue, Quezon City.

Submission of eligibility requirements, technical proposal and price offers will be between 8:00 AM to 9:55 AM at the NFA Boardroom, 10th Floor, Matimyas Bldg., 101 E. Rodriguez Sr. Avenue, Quezon City on **April 28, 2005. Opening of bids** will start at exactly 10:00 AM.

The National Food Authority reserves the right to reject any or all bid proposals to waive any required or defect therein and accept the bid/s which is deemed most advantageous to the Agency.

(Sgd.) **JESSUP P. NAVARRO**
Deputy Administrator
and Chairman, Bids and Awards Committee

(PDI–March 30 and April 6, 2005)

Republic of the Philippines
PROVINCE OF ZAMBOANGA DEL NORTE
PROVINCIAL GENERAL SERVICES OFFICE
Capitol Building, Dipolog City

INVITATION TO PRE-QUALIFY AND BID

FOR THE PLANNING, DESIGN, SITE DEVELOPMENT, AND CONSTRUCTION OF THE ZAMBOANGA DEL NORTE PROVINCIAL HOSPITAL IN THE CITY OF DIPOLOG, PROVINCE OF ZAMBOANGA DEL NORTE.

The Sangguniang Panlalawigan of the Province of Zamboanga del Norte has approved the flotation of up to P310M Abante Zanorte Bonds to finance the planning, design, site development and construction of the Zamboanga del Norte Provincial Hospital located in the City of Dipolog, Zamboanga del Norte. All interested proponents with the following qualifications are invited to pre-qualify and submit proposals for the planning, design, construction and site development of the said project.

1. PCAB/IAC CATEGORY – AAA and large "B" for buildings and industrial plants
2. Must be capable of undertaking the planning, design, site development and construction of a tertiary level hospital pursuant to the guidelines of the Department of Health
3. Must be willing to undertake the project and be paid in the form of Abante Zanorte Bonds with final maturity of up to seven (7) years from the date of issuance.

All interested proponents are hereby advised to obtain the Terms of Reference (TOR) from the Bids and Awards Committee (BAC) Secretariat Office upon submission of a letter of intent to pre-qualify and payment of the amount of P40,000.00 on or before 12:00 P.M. of 08 April 2005.

The letter of intent to pre-qualify shall be addressed to the Chairman, Office of the BAC, Dipolog City, Province of Zamboanga del Norte.

The Province of Zamboanga del Norte reserves the right to reject any or all proposals, waive any informality or defects therein and accept the offer most advantageous to the Province.

(Sgd.) **BAC Chairman**

(PDI- March 30, 2005)

REBAP's first general membership meeting ("REBAP No. 1")

THE REAL Estate Brokers Association of the Philippines (REBAP), Inc., will be holding its first general membership meeting on March 30 at 6 pm at the Makati Sports Club, Leviste Street, Makati City. The gathering will be attended by more than 300 regular members and guests from its more than 25 chapters in Metro Manila and the provinces.

REBAP national president Cherith A. Domingo invited Samie Lim, PCCI vice president to speak on the National Economy in relation to real estate as the highlight of the meeting. REBAP will also be launching the first real estate magazine, "REBAP Magazine". A guide for would-be real estate investors and end-users. Other business partners like developers, banks and investors will be gracing the occasion.

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Seminar on Investigative Research

THE AIM-Hills Governance Center, in cooperation with the Philippine Center for Investigative Journalism (PCIJ), will conduct a one-and-a-half-day training seminar on Investigative Research on April 19 and 20 at the AIM Conference Center Manila. The seminar will explain how investigations are carried out, and discuss examples of PCIJ investigations and their impact. Participants will learn how to conduct interviews on sensitive issues, retrieve documents, and draw information through computer-assisted data-gathering. How to investigate government purchases is one of the seminar highlights.

For details and inquiries, contact Ms. Ronette Capiral of the AIM-Hills Governace Center at the 750 1010 loc 2145 or email her at rcapiral@mail.aim.edu.ph.

ANHS 4th Grand Alumni Homecoming

THE ARNEDO National High School, Arnedo, Bolinao, Pangasinan will hold its 4th Grand Alumni Homecoming on April 9 at the Arnedo Elementary school ground. Please contact Renecion "Irene" Credo Custodio at 840-1401 loc. 203 or Fe de Vera de Leon at 285-5886 for details.

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LEGAL NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that the estate of the late VICTORIA ESPIRITU REYES & the late EMILIANO E. REYES, SR. were settled by their heirs through an extrajudicial settlement of estate which was settled by their heirs through an extrajudicial settlement acknowledged before Not. Pub. Atlee T. Viray of City of San Fernando, Pampanga as per Doc. 375; Page 75, Bk. 85, Series of 2005. (PDI 3/23, 30 & 4/6, '05)

Notice is hereby given that the Estate of the late RICHARD CRUZ SARITO was extra-judicially settled among his heirs and entered in the Notarial Register of Notary Public Atty. Hernand T. Gutierrez under Doc. No. 354; Page No. 161; Book III; Series of 2005
PDI-March 23, 30 & April 6, 2005)

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Republic of the Philippines
ENERGY REGULATORY COMMISSION
San Miguel Avenue, Pasig City

IN THE MATTER OF THE APPLICATION FOR APPROVAL OF THE BUSINESS SEPARATION AND UNBUNDLING PLAN (BSUP) PURSUANT TO THE PROVISIONS OF REPUBLIC ACT NO. 9136

ERC CASE NO. 2004-451

IBAAN ELECTRIC AND ENGINEERING CORPORATION (IEEC).
Applicant.
x----------x

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

TO ALL INTERESTED PARTIES:

Notice is hereby given of the filing on December 6, 2004 by applicant Ibaan Electric and Engineering Corporation (IEEC) of an application for the approval of its Business Separation and Unbundling Plan (BSUP) pursuant to the provision of Republic Act No. 9136 (R.A. 9136) docketed as ERC Case No. 2004-451.

The Commission has set the application for hearing on April 6, 2005 at two o'clock (2:00 P.M.) in the afternoon at the ERC Hearing Room, 15th Floor, Pacific Center Building, San Miguel Avenue, Pasig City.

All interested parties who may wish to comment on or oppose the said application should file their comments and/or oppositions on or before the date of hearing. Such parties who may wish to have the details of the application and who shall have manifested to the Commission their desire and intention to participate actively in the proceedings, may request that before the date of hearing, they be furnished with copies of the application by the applicant, which is hereby directed to furnish the parties making such request with copies of the application and its attachments. Likewise, any such interested party may examine the application and other pertinent records filed with the Commission during the usual office hours.

WITNESS, the Honorable RODOLFO B. ALBANO, JR., Chairman and the Honorables OLIVER B. BUTALID, JESUS N. ALCORDO and ALEJANDRO Z. BARIN, Commissioners, Energy Regulatory Commission, this 1st day of February, 2005 at Pasig City.

(Sgd.) MARIA TERESA A. R. CASTAÑEDA
Director III

(PDI-March 30, 2005)

Republic of the Philippines
COMMISSION ON AUDIT
Commonwealth Avenue, Quezon City, Philippines

RESOLUTION NO. 2005-001
DATE : FEB. 03, 2005

SUBJECT : **PROHIBITION FROM SECURING HEALTH CARE INSURANCE FROM PRIVATE INSURANCE AGENCIES.**

WHEREAS, under existing Civil Service Law, rules and regulations, it is prescribed that there shall be a health program in the government aimed at improving the working conditions of the employees;

WHEREAS, such program is provided thru the Philippine Health Insurance Corporation which is the government arm for insuring the availability of funds to extend hospitalization and sickness benefits to public officials and employees;

WHEREAS, the government already provides for the health insurance of its employees by appropriating funds therefor in the General Appropriations Act;

WHEREAS, procurement of another health insurance by government agencies from private health insurance companies is a disbursement of public funds for the same purpose and must be viewed as a form of additional allowance and compensation;

WHEREAS, by constitutional mandate, no elective or appointive public officer or employee shall receive additional, double, or indirect compensation, unless specifically authorized by law (Section 8, Article IX-B, 1987 Constitution);

WHEREAS, this Commission is constitutionally authorized to promulgate accounting and auditing rules and regulations for the prevention and disallowance of irregular, unnecessary, excessive, extravagant or unconscionable expenditures, or uses of government funds;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED as it is, hereby RESOLVED, that the procurement of private health insurance by any agency or instrumentality of the government is an irregular expenditure and constitutes unnecessary use of public funds which cannot be countenanced by this Commission;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that violation of this Resolution shall cause the disallowance of the corresponding disbursement of funds and the heads of the agencies or instrumentalities involved including government owned/or controlled corporations and those officials participating therein shall be held personally liable therefor.

This Resolution takes effect immediately.

Quezon City, February 03, 2005.

GUILLERMO N. CARAGUE
Chairman

EMMANUEL M. DALMAN
Commissioner

REYNALDO A. VILLAR
Commissioner

(PDI - March 30, 2005)

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SuperCharge your way to your dream car now!

Stop imagining your brand new car and supercharge your way to it now! Go to your nearest car dealer and ask for a BDO SuperCharged Auto Loan application or visit your nearest BDO branch in Metro Manila to get the best auto loan deal in town. You may also call 688-1224/1241/4040 or 631-8000!

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BSP expects inflation to hit 8-8.6%

By Michelle V. Remo

TETANGCO

THE BANGKO Sentral ng Pilipinas said the inflation rate in March would likely remain high, as the rising oil prices in the world market continued to push local consumer prices up.

BSP Deputy Governor Amando Tetangco Jr., who will replace BSP Governor Rafael Buenaventura when he retires in July, said inflation this month might hover between 8 and 8.6 percent.

The inflation forecast for the month is way higher than the 5 to 6 percent target for the whole of 2005.

In February, the rate of consumer price increases reached 8.5 percent largely due to the sharp rise in transport fares and in the costs of several food items.

"The February rate reflected a hangover from the high inflation rate in the second half of last year," Economic Planning Secretary Romulo Neri, who is also the director general of the National Economic and Development Autority (Neda), said earlier.

The government's economic team earlier set the inflation target at between 5 and 6 percent, anticipating that the increases in consumer prices would eventually ease by the middle of the year., barring any unexpected sharp rise in oil prices.

But as of March 25, Dubai crude, used as a regional benchmark for oil prices, hit $45.64 per barrel. Unleaded and diesel prices, meanwhile, already reached $59.45 and $67.05 per barrel.

"We were expecting that oil prices would go down this month, but it did not," said Diwa Guinigundo, BSP assistant governor.

The inflation started accelerating in the second half of 2004, reaching as high as 8.6 percent in December, or way above the government's official target of only 4 to 5 percent, as oil prices began to post record highs.

BSP Governor Rafael Buenaventura said that with the behavior of oil prices in the world market, inflation was expected to accelerate.

He said, however, that the rate would not reach double-digit level as feared by some.

DENR corporate arm to develop chromite field

By Christine A. Gaylican

STATE-OWNED Natural Resources Mining Development Corp. will explore and develop the Dinagat Island chromite and copper mining reserves in Northern Surigao.

NRMDC president Artemio Disini said earlier studies conducted by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) showed significant chromite and copper deposits in this government reserve that remained untapped.

"We believe it is time that we develop the potential of the Dinagat Island mine reserve to take advantage of the big demand for chromite and copper in China," said Disini.

He said the corporate arm of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources was advised by its financial adviser, the Development Bank of the Philippines, to go into strategic joint venture arrangement with interested parties for this project. The project is expected to cost at least P1 billion.

In the meantime, the P2-billion Mt. Diwalwal Direct State Utilization Project, another NRMDC project, has potential reserves of 2,000 tons of gold a day.

This project is being undertaken by an NRMDC subsidiary called NRMDC-Gold.

Disini, who worked as president of Lepanto Mining Corp. for more than four decades, has started to install a system in the mining activities at Mt. Diwalwal, which covers 8,100 hectares.

"By year-end, NRMDC-Gold will be listed on the Philippine Stock Exchange," he added. Disini is confident that the 25-year life of the mine would attract investors.

He said that developing the gold mine's potential could translate to sales worth about $50-$75 million a year and additional government revenue of $2.84 million.

Disini said that in spite of the government takeover of the so-called gold rush area in 2004, small-scale miners were still allowed to mine from the surface up to only 600 meters deep.

"A delineation of mining areas has been put in place. Our company, NRMDC-Gold will mine below 600 meters. We may need fresh investments of about $2 million at least for further exploration activities," Disini said in an interview.

The Philippine government through the NRMDC owns 55 percent of the Mt. Diwalwal project and the remaining 45 percent is owned by the PNOC-Energy Development Corp. (PNOC-EDC).

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Editor **Cesar D. Mangawang**

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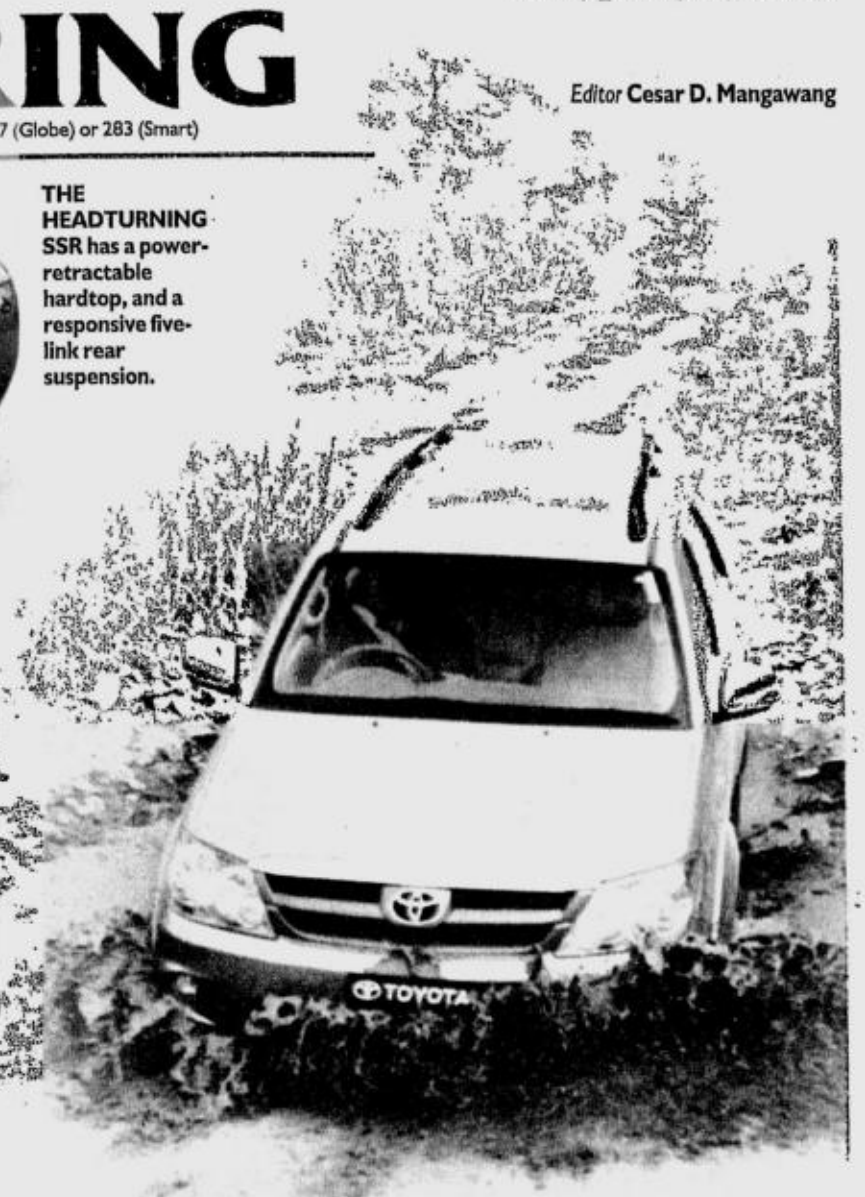


FORTUNER gets wild and dirty.

FROM ARIZONA TO AUSTRALIA

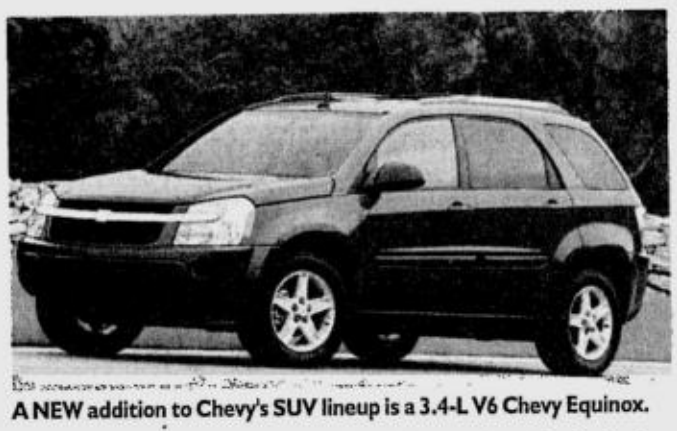
One hot showdown between top automakers

By Tessa R. Salazar

WEEKS before Mexican Erik Morales and our own Manny Pacquiao boxed "with everything" in the gambler's paradise of Las Vegas, the world's top two automotive heavyweights—General Motors and Toyota—had a showdown of their own.

The world was their arena. One displayed its power in the dry lands of Arizona, the other flashed form and substance in the outback of Australia. Fortunately, this wide-eyed spectator got to witness this motoring showdown—live—unlike that "slightly delayed" Morales-Pacquiao fight on free TV.

The Toyota event was the more recent. And was it a frighteningly interactive trip.



A NEW addition to Chevy's SUV lineup is a 3.4-L V6 Chevy Equinox.

General Motors and Toyota had a showdown of their own

Latest crop of IMVs

Toyota invited over 50 motoring writers (including 10 Filipinos) to Australia's Gold Coast two weeks ago to get a feel of the automaker's latest crop of IMVs (international multipurpose vehicles) for on and off-road courses.

Unable to contain my enthusiasm for an off-road course one afternoon in Darlington Park, I grabbed the steering wheel of a Fortuner SUV (soon to be released in local shores, folks), and without the guidance of a navigator beside me, the course marshals allowed me to take the route gung-ho.

The Fortuner felt immediately at home and made short work of the rough trail. Its confident handling gave me the pleasure to relax and relish the view of a semi-desert during the hottest time of the day. The air-con was up to the task, too, and the stereo provided company.

The Fortuner's size—bigger than a Rav4 but slightly smaller than a Prado—was just right, and didn't hog the one-lane track.

Lost in the outback

It was after a-few more minutes that I noticed that the trail got narrower, the climbs and descents steeper. The trail shifted from a Fortuner-friendly soft off-road to the exclusively-for-4x4s extreme off-road. Not good.

I was lost, for how long I had no idea. I couldn't turn back, not with the road this narrow. Deep ravines on either side of the trail made backing up extremely difficult.

The Fortuner was literally starting to lose its grip, as well. As the climb got steeper in some parts, the tires slid sickeningly. (The Fortuner's tires weren't for extreme off-roading).

After about 15 minutes of trudging along aimlessly, I was spotted by a marshal who was driving a ruggedly handsome, retro look Land Cruiser 78 designed in the tradition of the first Land Cruisers.

2 lessons

After learning of this sheila's predicament (sheila—Aussie for female), the equally ruggedly handsome bloke (or could I call him Outback Jack instead?) said, in a deep Aussie accent, "You're safe to back up now, I'll guide you. You need to turn back soon before other vehicles come rushing down."

To make a long story short, I got back to the starting line, and the two marshals that let me go apologized for the glitch.

I learned two lessons here. Lesson 1: Fools rush in, and fools get lost unguided in the outback. Lesson 2: When you do get lost in the Australian outback, wait for a bloke on a Land Cruiser 78, and get swept off your feet back to the starting line. If you're a male driver who's lost, wish for the opposite sex, though.

That done, I proceeded to test drive another IMV model the Hi-Lux pickup. Noticeable during this drive was the antilock brake system (ABS) not yet present in Hi-Lux versions in the Philippines. An ABS feature on a handsome Hi-Lux would be worth the wait.

And then came my turn to drive Australia's

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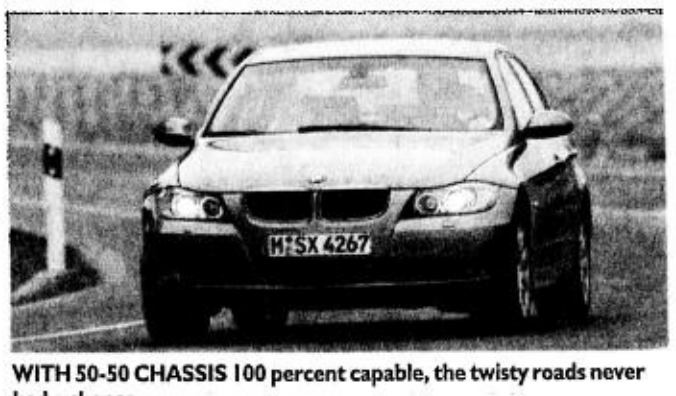


WITH 50-50 CHASSIS 100 percent capable, the twisty roads never had a chance.

Munich, we have liftoff: the new 3 Series

(Last of two parts)

THE NEW 3 Series' fundamentals are solid. A factory claimed 50-50 weight distribution, coupled with a new-fangled chassis that is both lighter and stiffer, results in top-notch driver feedback.

It is a dynamic driving tool first and foremost. Overall chassis is confident and capable, as proven by fast laps on the Albacete Race Circuit and several "go-kart" runs on a skid pad.

Road feel from the E90's computer-filtered steering is defined and consistent rather than raw and instinctive. Seat of the pants sensation is slightly less harsh than the previous E46 model, as a newly developed five-arm rear axle is in place.

Engine power

The new axle uses a realignment of two main individual suspension arms that allow the system to pivot on virtual kinematic points, regardless of the physical positioning of the bearings and joints. This results in more comfort and more road traction according to BMW.

For an engine, we have the newest evolution of the much-ballyhooed BMW 3.0-liter in-line six, good for 258bhp and 300Nm of torque. Engine response is sharper due to a new Valvetronic engine load/throttle system. New generation Bi-Vanos intake and exhaust camshaft management take care of making the engine suitably useful in both stifling traffic and attempts at stabbing at the speed limit.

CATCH MY DRIFT

Andre Palma

Magnesium finds itself in the construction of the new water-cooled crankcase, engine bedplate and cylinder head cover. The weight reduction schemes bring the entire engine weight to 355 lb, 10 percent lighter than its predecessor. They also make it the lightest six-cylinder power plant in its performance class.

Real driver's car

I would classify it as a "real driver's car" but it falls short of earning the "dedicated track weapon" accolade. Enthusiasts will love this 3 Series, but should probably ante up for the factory sport suspension or pray to the car gods for the new M3 to make its Philippine debut soon.

Yet in spite of the sporting genes that underpin the zest of the 3 Series, a slew of driver-assistance functions can make this car easy to drive even for the most "challenged" motorists. Dynamic Stability Control (DSC) uses a combination of computer-actuated steering assistance and individual brake caliper control to keep the car from losing precious traction even in the most "motivated" driving conditions.

Smart car

Under the full blanket of DSC protection, the car thinks and behaves better than most drivers I know. Oversteer, the tendency of a car to want to keep turning despite the compelling coercion of the driver, is virtually nonexistent. Braking hard, while unbalanced in a corner or even braking with the tires on different surfaces would surely mean loss of traction in 90 percent of vehicles on Philippine roads. DSC allows the silicon computer chips of the E90 to intervene and correct what human gray matter failed to process. In effect, the car is smart than you and I.

Those wishing a livelier and more engrossed drive can opt to operate under the DTC (Dynamic Traction Control) subfunction of DSC. This will allow the brave to induce a little oversteer with the gas pedal; "steering with the throttle" if you wish, and will only come in short of a full uncontrolled drift, hopefully preventing an ensuing spectacular crash. Purists and the track day set will probably choose to aggressively operate the vehicle with no traction control at all. This is the most dynamic form that the current E90 can provide and deservedly the most rewarding.

RP market debut

The new BMW 3 Series is set to make its Philippine market debut in the very near future. Insiders hint at a possibility of three engines available in three trim levels. Possibly powering the E90 iteration of the 3 Series are two inline six gasoline engines (the 3.0 mentioned above and a "smaller" 2.5) and a 2.0 flat four Variable Nozzle Turbo sport diesel with the latest generation common rail diesel technology.

Trim levels point toward a characteristically luxurious executive edition, a sport version for more motivated driving and a tech version chock full of interfaces for all your wireless and audio needs. Pricing will, without doubt be, premium, and be a sure reminder of our mere mortality and personal financial limitations.

The new 3 Series is definitely better appreciated as a sum of all its fundamental systems plus its innovative technologies. Not one stands out entirely. Think of the experience of driving it as more like listening to a symphony orchestra than a virtuoso soloist.

It is a better car because of the way all the systems assist the driver in unison. This level of assistance can be tweaked to produce an experience as raw or as tame as wanted. In this way, different drivers and their respective driving styles will bring out varied 3 Series experiences. I envy those who will be able to experience this firsthand.

SLOW IN and very fast out, DSC and DTC help the author stay on terra firma.

Formula One breakthrough for Toyota

AS I KEEP saying here, late is never late. Thus, Jarno Trulli deserves our applause for finally earning himself and Toyota a podium finish in the Formula One at Sepang in Kuala Lumpur a few days back.

The lead paragraph from Toyota's Ariel de Jesus to chronicle Trulli's remarkable finish was cute, and to quote Ariel: "Panasonic Toyota Racing has today scored its debut podium position after a 'Trulli' outstanding drive from Jarno that saw him finish a comfortable second place in the grueling 56-lap race in Kuala Lumpur."

In the same dispatch appeared this line: "A determined drive by Ralf Schumacher made it two Toyota cars in the Top 5 for a total of 12 world championship points and a second-place finish in the Constructors' championship."

* * *

Jarno Trulli, racing for Toyota for the first time like Ralf Schumacher, scored his runner-up finish in 53 races in the world's No. 1 car race. He set the tone of his outstanding finish by registering the second fastest time in the qualifying behind Renault's Fernando Alonso, who topped the Malaysian leg.

"I had an excellent start and was easily keeping my second position behind Fernando. From there, I had an absolutely trouble-free race and could control those cars behind me. I want to thank everyone in the Toyota team and all the engineers, mechanics both here and in Cologne for giving the car with which I could score Toyota's first-ever podium finish. It was a great result and I think this could be the start of even greater things to come," said Trulli.

Ralf Schumacher, brother of the eminent, seven-time Formula One champion Michael Schumacher, helped make it a day to remember for Toyota after bringing his TF105 home in fifth position and picking up four championship points in a difficult race for the German.

"This is a wonderful result for the team. First and foremost I am happy for my teammate, but also for myself. I think it was a good, but difficult race for me. I am happy to have finished the race altogether and I am pleased to have contributed to our double points-finish today to take us to second in the championship."

FULL TANK

Al Mendoza

The Trulli-Schumacher tandem was forged only this season and their podium finishes in the Malaysian Grand Prix is a first in four years of Toyota participation in the Formula One.

Toyota has signed Ralf Schumacher to a three-year contract and things seem to augur well for the new partnership. Tsutomu Tomita, who finalized Ralf's entry into Toyota camp last Jan. 1 this year, was the key to Schumacher's Top 5 finish in Kuala Lumpur, the booming city where I first had my ringside view of Formula One racing in 2000 through Caltex.

* * *

Still on Formula One, Jenson Button has been given a huge incentive to remain at BAR after Honda announced that it wants to make him world champion in three years.

It will be recalled that Honda has raised its share in the team to 40 percent, highlighting its commitment to the pursuit of the Formula One crown and hoping it can persuade Button to remain with the team beyond next season, when he is free to seek another drive.

Honda Racing president Shoichi Tanaka insisted Honda was committed to fight for the championship title.

"We've set ourselves a target of three years in which we want to win the world championship," he said. "It is up to the team and Honda to show him we can win the world championship. As a team, we have progressed well, but now we need to really make a big step forward because we want to have a package that can challenge Ferrari."

Uh-oh. And Michael Schumacher of Ferrari has been struggling since the start of this year's Formula One.

In moving to Honda, Jenson Button parted ways with his manager John Byfield as a result of the ill-fated attempt to move Button to BMW-Williams last year.

* * *

Here's a glass to Willi Soong for successfully staging the 6th Jaguar-Land Rover Golf Invitational at Sta. Elena only a while back. Some 200 elite Jaguar owners, close associates and guest VIPs from the business, government and media sectors battled it out for an opportunity to be flown to Scotland to represent the country in the Jaguar World Golf in Gleneagles, Scotland.

Cheers to the winners—Raymond Co and Joey Ticson.

"But all the participants were actually winners for finishing the entire tournament. They are all busy individuals who took time out to be with us," said Willi Soong, chair and president of Jaguar-Land Rover Philippines.

Willi promised to stage a Jaguar Media Invitational next year.

* * *

NLEX NOTES. Travel to up North during the Holy Week was literally hassle-free. Thank God and also to the new Northern Luzon Expressway for my safe trip. I left Wednesday and the anticipated logjam wasn't there. Oh, well, I came home Good Friday and, yes, the NLEX was a virtual ghost town: You can count with your fingers the motorists traveling that day. Ah, what a ride back to Manila: Smooth and breezy. Patrol cars allowed me to go 120 kph, which was just right considering the world-class highway I was traversing.

* * *

QUOTE ME. Road signs are aplenty reminding motorists in the expressway that "slow-moving vehicles should stay on the right lane." What is a slow-moving vehicle in the expressway? Methinks one that can be overtaken is a slow-moving vehicle-whether it's on the right lane or not and traveling 100 kph or not.

One hot showdown between top automakers

From page C1

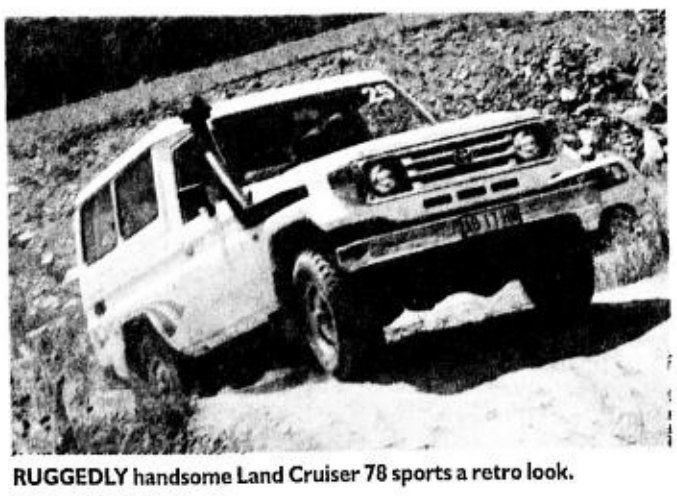
best-selling 4x4, the Land Cruiser 78. In 2004, 8,000 of these hard-working brutes were sold, giving Toyota a 59.9 percent share of the heavy-duty, four-wheel drive vehicle market in this subcontinent.

The Land Cruiser 78's strong low-speed torque big diesel engine, which vibrates like a massager, lets you really feel there's more than enough power down there to tackle every obstacle the outback could muster. The Land Cruiser 78 also features the traditional rigid axle design.

The age of the hybrid

The automotive world scoffed at Toyota when it introduced its hybrid Prius sedan. But looks who's laughing all the way to the bank. Toyota's hybrid vehicles are so in demand today the carmaker can barely keep up production at pace.

Thus, the sight of the hybrid Alphard—a mini van that comfortably seats eight—was a welcome surprise for us "gas-minded" motoring scribes.



RUGGEDLY handsome Land Cruiser 78 sports a retro look.

Even more admirably, the Alphard performed above expectations in the acceleration department. It was almost impossible to know the engine was on, as it didn't make even the slightest sound at the turn of the ignition. The monitor on the dash indicating what was going on inside the engine, though, takes a bit of getting used to—the indicators are all in Japanese. Anyway, the monitors inform the driver if the engine has switched to battery or fuel cells.

Chevy mania

Now let's go back some more months, back to January 2005 in Arizona, for General Motors' own display of power in the desert. (GM invited over 250 journalists all over the world.)

Chevrolet made sure that no outback tryst could top its own treat for Asia's motoring scribes—a drive on a Z6 Corvette. Up until then only veteran Manny de los Reyes could claim to be the only Asian motoring journalist to have driven the Corvette during the North American Auto Shows.

Sorry, Manny, but that list just got three names longer. Philippine Star's Dong Magsajo, C! Magazine's Kevin Limjoco and myself relished what easily was the highlight of our trip to the North American International Auto Show.

I still have my qualms about that Corvette ride, though. For one, the Corvette's ride height must have been designed for drivers above 5'8". Even at the maximum seat height, I still felt I needed a pillow or a high chair on my seat to see completely up front. And probably because I was too vertically challenged, the view at the rear was compromised as well.

Being short, though, meant my ears were closer to the engine. And wow, did it roar business. The gurgle and hiss hinted of the pent-up fury that dares you for release. That language I liked.

The GM proving ground in Arizona where we got to drive the Corvette didn't quite release all that potential fury. Sharp curves restrained us. Maybe it was intended to be so, because so much power under the hood is dangerous even for seasoned drivers (and too expensive for the host should we damage this car).

Still high from our ride with the Corvette, we also drove the 2005 SSR—a vehicle that's part pickup, part roadster and pure Chevrolet. It has a power-retractable hardtop.

A lot of SSR has been roaming the American roads lately. We wonder, however, if it could ever see the light of day in the Philippines.

The little devil that sprang a surprise in the Philippines also showed up at the Arizona proving ground. The clean-cut Giogietto Guigiaro design of a Chevy Aveo, a tiny candy-colored hatchback, brought back fond memories of test-drives dodging traffic and trucks in Makati.

The Aveo 1.5 hatch, brave enough to be parked side by side with its exotic cousins, earned its own degree of respect because of its seamless transmission and power on demand, and with minimal surge at that. Other Chevy vehicles that we played with are Cobalt and Equinox.

Showdown winner

It's hard to call the winner of this showdown. If you ask me, I'd call it a draw. GM took me to new heights of driving ecstasy with its Corvette, but Toyota brought me back to earth with its Land Cruiser. Can there be a hybrid Toyota and GM joint project?

I may be asking too much. That would be like asking Pacquiao and Morales to lock arm in arm, move step by step in an elaborate ballroom dance.

TOYOTA shows off its final IMV: the Fortuner in Sydney.

THE FORTUNER'S interior resembles that of the Innova. Made in Thailand, this demo unit has the steering wheel on the right side.

THE FRONT-FACING 3rd row seat can be stowed vertically to increase cargo space.

A FORTUNER is cleaned after tackling off-road courses.

Coming soon: the Toyota Fortuner

ON THE ROAD

Aida Sevilla-Mendoza

ONE of the best things about Toyota's recent Great Multipurpose Vehicle Adventure in Australia was the Fortuner. Since the Fortuner began to be sold in Thailand only last January and was not yet available in other Southeast Asian countries at the time of the Great MPV Adventure, the motoring journalists from Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines were the ones most eager to examine and test-drive this sport utility vehicle addition to the IMV (International Innovative Motor Vehicle) lineup of Toyota.

The Fortuner, made in Thailand, completes the IMV series and will be exported to other countries starting April. Built on the same new TOP (Toyota Outstanding Performance) platform as the Innova minivan and the 2005 Hilux pickup, the full-time 4-wheel-drive Fortuner is powered by the same 1KD-FTV 3.0-liter intercooler Variable Nozzle (VN) turbo second-generation common rail direct-injection diesel engine that propels the Hilux 4x4. This means that the 4WD Fortuner is just as fast and strong as the Hilux 4x4 with max output of 163 PS/3,400 rpm and 343 Nm/1,400-3,200 rpm max torque. Plus the convenience of a smooth-shifting 4-speed gate-type automatic transmission.

7 seats

Marketed by Toyota as a medium-sized, affordable 4WD SUV, the Fortuner looked to me almost as big as the Land Cruiser Prado when it was parked beside the latter at Darlington Park on the Gold Coast. The Fortuner definitely is not a compact SUV since it can comfortably seat seven including driver while compact SUVs are five-passenger except for the Suzuki Grand Vitara XL-7. However, the Fortuner appears beefier than the Grand Vitara XL-7.

Brawny as it looks, the 4WD Fortuner is nonetheless described by Toyota as an urban SUV which, with its refined styling and outstanding comfort, "is more of a passenger car than a pickup." In this context, the word "pickup" apparently equivalents "truck." And certainly, you will feel that the Fortuner is more of a passenger car than a truck when you drive it on paved roads, so smooth, quiet and sans NVH (noise, vibration, harshness) is the ride despite the diesel engine. For this is a D-4D engine, Toyota's version of CRDi (common rail direct injection), the latest in diesel technology.

Credit the carlike ride and handling to the Fortuner's suspension system: independent double wishbone with coil springs and stabilizer in front and instead of the usual leaf springs at the rear, a new four-link setup with coil springs and lateral control rod. Rack and pinion steering ensure accurate response. Like the Hilux, the Fortuner is equipped with 15-inch ventilated disc brakes up front plus leading trailing drums at the rear. The 16-inch alloy wheels are shod with 265/70R16 tires.

Off-road

Having a smooth, carlike ride quality does not mean that the Fortuner will falter when it comes to off-road and rough terrain situations. On the easy and medium off-road courses at Darlington Park that I tackled in the Fortuner, it proved to be as capable as its bigger North American brothers, the Sequoia and Land Cruiser Prado. The only drawback is that with the Fortuner, you have to shift to Neutral or Park before you can engage the 4WD gear lever. Which could confirm what Toyota said, that the Fortuner is more of a passenger car than a truck. Despite its 4WD drive train, the Fortuner is essentially an urban SUV perfect for those who seldom venture off-road. (By the way, surveys continue to show that about 95 percent of SUV owners rarely if ever go off-roading.)

The spacious interior of the Fortuner resembles that of the Innova's, with three rows of forward-facing seats that can be rearranged in different configurations to suit the passenger and cargo load combination of the moment. The front seats are bucket type, the bench seat in the middle splits and folds down 60/40 while the rearmost seat splits 50/50 and can be stowed vertically to increase cargo room. The back door opens upward for easy loading of cargo. There is no need to worry about a full load of passengers and/or cargo because of the touted strength, durability and increased frame rigidity of the Fortuner's TOP platform.

Fully equipped

For an IMV, the Fortuner's interior comes fully equipped with leather seats and door trim, AM/FM cassette player and 6-disc CD changer and MP3 with six speakers, dual-type aircon with rear cooler, map lamps, room lamps, illuminated entry system, 4-spoke leather steering wheel and tilt steering column, power everything, wireless door lock and theft deterrent system, two 12-volt power outlets, chrome-door handles, lockable glove box and an overhead sunglass holder. The exterior features include a hood bulge (like the Hilux's), multireflector headlights and rear combination lamps, fog lamps, sidestep and cover, chrome door outside handles, back door garnish, roof rails and color-keyed bumpers and grille.

A full range of active and passive safety features is standard: ABS, LSPV (load sensing proportionate valve), two SRS airbags, collapsible steering column, clearance and back sonar, high-mount stop lamp, side-door impact beams, 3-point ELR seatbelts, head impact protection structure, fuel cut-off valve, safety brake pedal.

So the next question is: when is the Fortuner coming here? Perhaps in May or June, since Toyota Motor Thailand starts exporting it this April. Don't bother to ask Toyota Motor Philippines—to heighten the suspense and anticipation, they won't tell you.

* * *

TODAY'S BUMPER STICKER: Never drive faster than your angel can fly.

* * *

E-mail comments to asevilla@inquirer.com.ph.

Panasonic Toyota looks forward to Bahrain

TRULLI

PANASONIC Toyota Racing looks forward to the upcoming Bahrain Grand Prix this weekend with high confidence after scoring its first-ever podium position in the recent Malaysian Grand Prix. The Bahrain Grand Prix is set to unfold again this weekend with all teams gearing for another tight race after a spectacular race in Sepang.

Toyota driver Jarno Trulli drove his TF105 to a historic second-place finish in Malaysia earning Toyota world championship points and pushing it to second place in the Formula One constructors' championship.

Aiming for strong finish

The Toyota F1 team is aiming to for another strong finish in the ultramodern Bahrain International Circuit looking for an improvement from its top 10 finish last year in the same circuit.

The driver tandem of Jarno Trulli and Ralf Schumacher will be going flat-out anew to sustain the momentum of their outstanding performance in Sepang where they placed second and fifth, respectively.

During the Malaysian Grand Prix, Jarno Trulli drove a remarkable and competitive race to secure Panasonic Toyota Racing's first visit to the podium in 53 races. He drove an outstanding race and matched the pace of the race-winning Renault team. His qualifying time was only bettered by Fernando Alonso, who stopped one lap before the Toyota driver, underlining the sheer competitiveness of the TF105 package.

Strong performance

Trulli explained the strong performance of not only the car, but the whole team as well.

Ralf Schumacher helped make it a day to remember for Toyota after bringing his TF105 home in fifth position and picking up four championship points in a difficult race for the German. Schumacher praised the team's performance despite several obstacles during the race.

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3M Scotchtint Sun Control Window Film delivers protection in this case is threefold and personal safety against the harmful ultraviolet rays of the sun, safety against possible security threats outside the vehicle and safety in an accident or collision. (The third one is never thought of but is of vital importance!)

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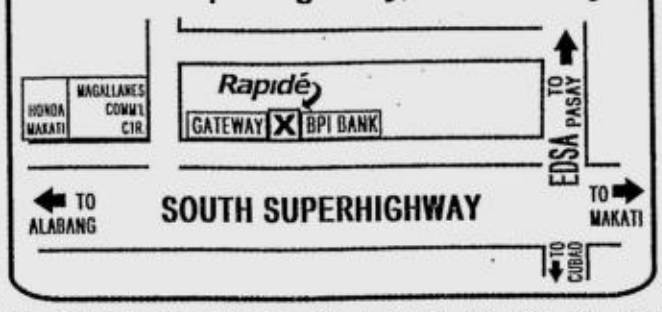

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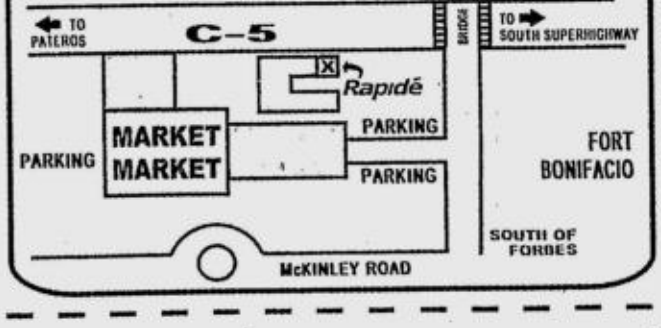

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Pilipinas Shell introduces forecourt safety campaign

PILIPINAS Shell recently launched its forecourt safety campaign dubbed as "Wag magpasiklab" safety campaign at the C5 Shell Service station in Taguig, Metro Manila. The campaign is part of Shell's corporate safety advocacy.

"Wag magpasiklab" safety awareness campaign aims to encourage motorists to comply with the forecourt safety measures and observe safe acts while refueling in the forecourt.

Unsafe acts

Unsafe acts normally being committed in the forecourt are considered sources of ignition that can lead to fire and explosion. Among these are smoking in the forecourt, use of mobile phone while refueling, engine is on while refueling and filling of unapproved plastic containers.

Also considered unsafe as it may lead to an accident is straddling the motorbike while refueling. These unsafe acts can cause harm to people and damage to property.

Top Driver Challenge starts Saturday

THE THIRD edition of the C! Top Driver Challenge—the country's first and only search for the Philippines' future motor racing stars—flags off to a rousing start with the first of the Ford dealership qualifying rounds on Saturday, from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m., at Ford Makati.

The Challenge, which is organized by Tuason Racing School Auto Developments, aims to discover fresh talent from the grassroots level through a series of four increasingly difficult trials of skill, courage and character. It is sponsored by C! Magazine, Ford Racing, Addict Mobile, Standard Insurance, Goodyear, Petron Corp., Ambi Pur Car, Oakley, H&R Springs, Options Unlimited and Trapik.com, adidas, trade Show, Manila Speedzone and Brothers Burger.

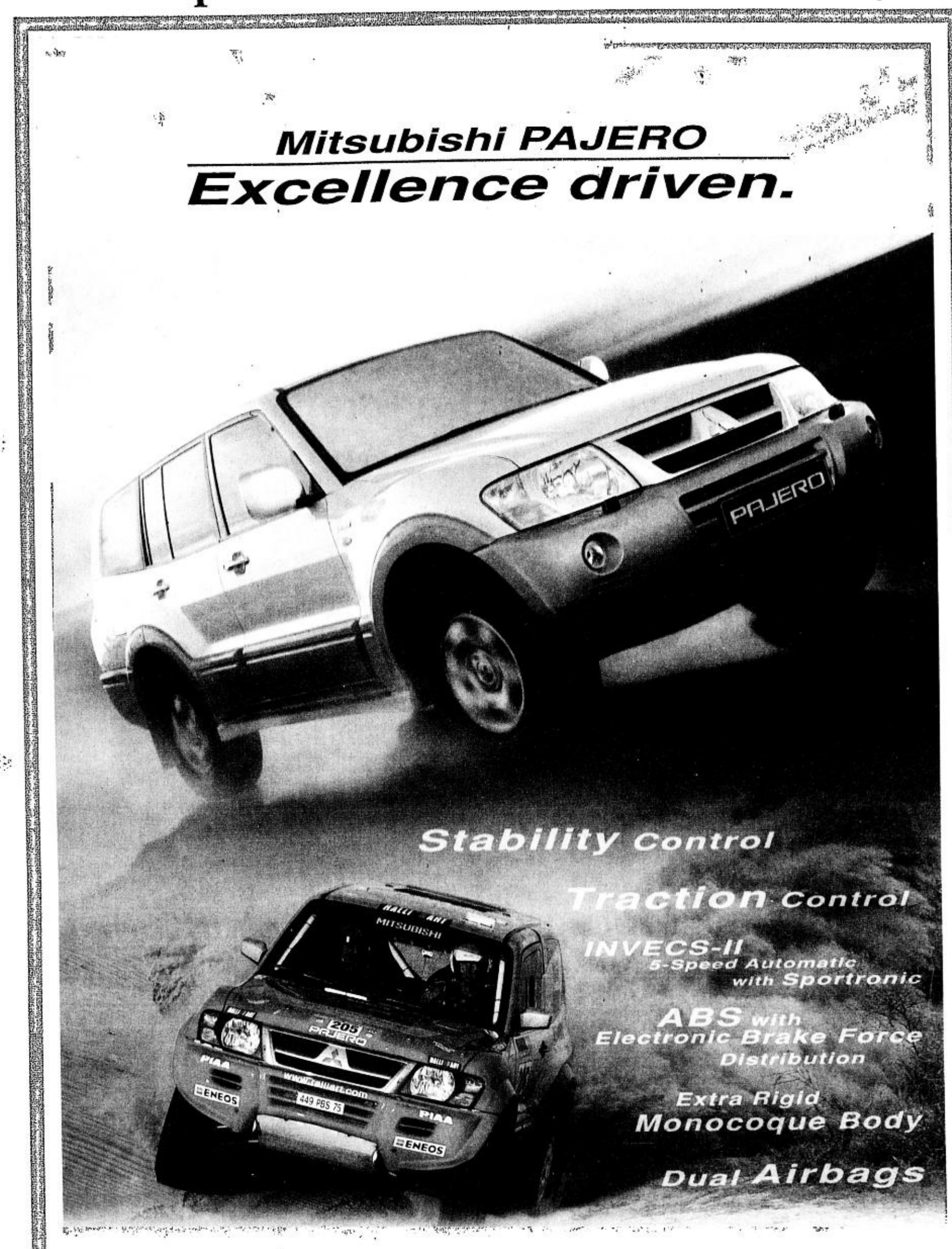
New feature

A new feature of this year's search is a special preselection phase, which will be held in Ford Makati on April 2, Ford Alabang on April 8 & 9, Ford Balintawak on April 16 and Ford Cebu on May 7, wherein the top 20 winners will represent the Ford dealers in the succeeding legs.

A qualifying leg will also be held during the Transhow, which is scheduled on April 21 to 23 at the SM Megamall. Starting this year, competitors will also be allowed to enter at any stage of the challenge.

The C! Top Driver Challenge is open to those aged 17 and above who are holders of a valid driver's license. The entry fee for leg one is P150. Competitors who are eliminated in or miss leg one may enter any of the succeeding legs subject to the following entry fees: leg two, P3,500; leg three, P4,000 and leg four, P11,000.

For more information, visit the TRS at 41 Pioneer Street corner Edsa, Mandaluyong City. You may also call 635-2587/88 and 747-2378.



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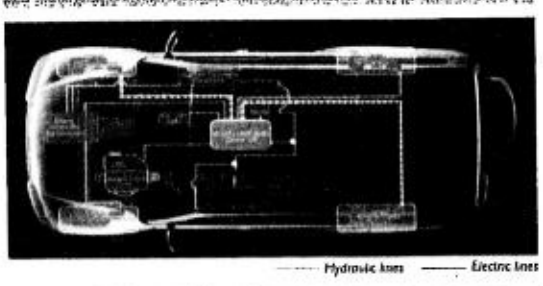

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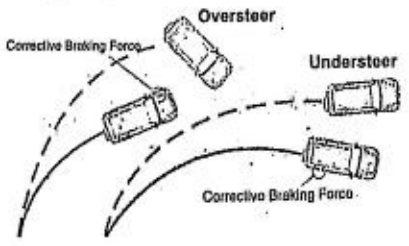

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Editor **Chelo Banal-Formoso**
Chief of Correspondents **Pam Pastor**

Summer strokes for different folks, Part 1

We know 2bU! readers are a varied lot. One summer guide would definitely not be enough. This season, we decided to create different summer guides to suit your different personalities. We have fun and exciting ideas to fill your scorching summer days with. We have activities for fashion lovers, makeup mavens, bookworms, food aficionados, self-confessed geeks, tycoons-in-the-making, creative minds, the fit and the athletic, the travel bugs, the golden-hearted, the music fans and the fresh graduates. And that's just for starters.

We have more summer guides for you next week. Watch out for them!

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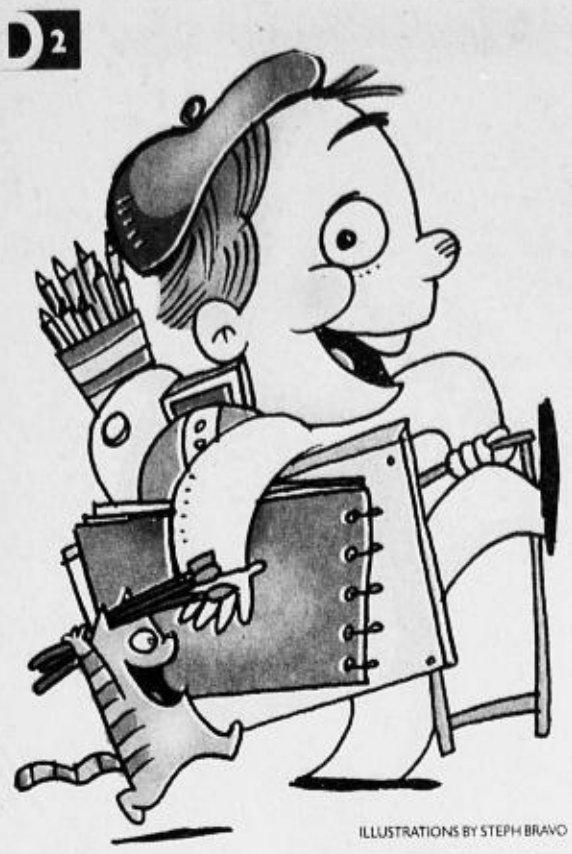


ILLUSTRATIONS BY STEPH BRAVO

By Christian B. Bautista
2bU! Correspondent

For students who actually want to do something constructive during the summer rather than pick up the couch potato routine, the next few months would be a good time to learn new things.

Some people take up a new sport; others learn to play instruments while some travel to foreign countries. But for those who want to exercise the right side of their brains during the two-month break, there's a lot going on this summer to help you along the way.

Be it filmmaking, photography or painting, there's a slew of art workshops and exhibits to bring out the artist in you.

Learn to paint

A whole bunch of painting classes is held at the Ayala Museum, most of which cater to novices. You can learn the basics of the different mediums such as charcoal, pastel, watercolor and acrylics.

There are also classes for Indian folk painting, basic Chinese painting, landscape painting, still life painting and portrait painting. The workshops last from April to June, with fees ranging from P2,000 to P6,000. Pre-registration is ongoing, so you might have to get a move-on to get in. Call 7577117-21 loc. 29.

Work with your hands

A good way to explore your artistry is through sculpture. It's a tough craft to learn. But

The Grander Home Entertainment Viewing Experience

Are you still looking for the perfect visual centerpiece for your home entertainment system?

Well, no need to look any further.

Samsung, a global leader in consumer home electronics, will let you bring home and enjoy the ultimate home cinema experience with the introduction of Samsung's Digital Light Processing (DLP) rear projection television range into the Philippine marketplace.

Samsung's DLP TV offering has already redefined the television market the world over and Samsung expects to invigorate the rear-projection television category in the country and bring it home right into your living room.

Revolutionizing Television

With the unique vertical projection (or rocket) mechanism form, Samsung has been able to design a sleek, slimline product, which is totally different from the large, bulky rear projection TVs of previous years. The feather touch control panel on the pedestal provides the user with maximum convenience coupled with a strikingly elegant design.

The flagship model SP56L7HX features Samsung's latest Digital Natural Image engine (DNIe3), which includes 6x density enhancement and My Color control.

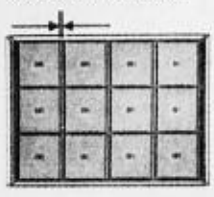
With a resolution of 2.76 Mega pixel and contrast ratio of 2,500:1, brightness of 1000cd/2, the SP56L7HX definitely delivers stunning image quality. It also features built-in 30Watt JBL speakers with SRS® TruSurround XT sound quality output.

This new 56-inch DLP TV can also serve as a large PC monitor of W-XGA resolution (1280x720).

Its 720-line Progressive Scan feature delivers high-quality image data processing. And as a perfect DVD display monitor, its Cinema Progressive Scan feature enables high quality reproduction of both broadcast images and DVD quality movies.

What is DLP? DMD?

Developed by Texas Instruments, Digital Light Processing (DLP) made it technologically possible to allow the world's leading manufacturers like Samsung, to develop projection and display solutions for business, home entertainment and commercial entertainment use.



Based on a Digital Micromirror Device (DMD) of up to 1.3 million microscopic mirrors, DLP rear projection TVs reflect light to create pixels on the screen-1 mirror is equal to 1 pixel.

Samsung takes advantage of this next generation DMD processor, giving them the best picture quality of any DLP rear-projection TV available on the market today.

In fact, DLP technology has a much simpler optical design, equipped with a more reflective surface, that deflects heat easily. The technology's efficient use of light also means a low lamp requirement, which is completely against the need of typical LCD-based televisions that require a brighter lamp, and because of its transmissive design, it absorbs more heat. LCD too degrades over time affecting overall picture quality.

In terms of projection characteristics, the DLP panel has a large active area that provides seamless film like display unlike LCD, which has a smaller active area, giving annoyingly grainy and pixilated display. And because DMD is digital, it provides precise control not susceptible to changes, delivering constant performance all the time. Again, unlike LCD, where the technology is variable because of its analog attributes, its design could be greatly affected by temperature, vibration, heat, and humidity, hence deteriorating the system over a period of time.

Samsung's DNIe3 Advantage

DNIe™ Digital Natural Image engine

Samsung's very own Digital Natural Image Engine or DNIe3 technology now has 6x density, providing superior image quality against LCD-type display monitors. DNIe3 processes sharp images and colors beyond what most eyes could see. And with DNIe's exclusive technology joining together with TI's DLP chip and Germany's Carl Zeiss optical engine, the strategic alliance created an unprecedented combination of three of the world's best technologies offering the grandest visual experience for today's discriminating consumer.

The My Color Control feature integrated with DNIe technology provides the convenience for users in adjusting hue levels (pinks, blues and greens) to the tastes and/or their requirements. It achieves a critical and personalized natural color characteristic without affecting the other colors.

Digital Black

A major dilemma of digital image reproduction is producing the color black- a problem that has haunted digital camera and digital television manufacturers, not to mention filmmakers as well. There is absolutely no way to produce pitch black digitally. And Samsung knows this.

To compensate this seemingly awkward situation, Samsung developed the DarkChip to realize the color black in-depth and finally express all the possible details of a black scene on a film or video. It minimizes light dispersion by filling up the hole in the micro mirrors. And with the help of a Neutral Density Filter (NDF) simply by adding a dark green filter in the color wheel, the technique enables considerable noise reduction and detail enhancement for darker scenes.

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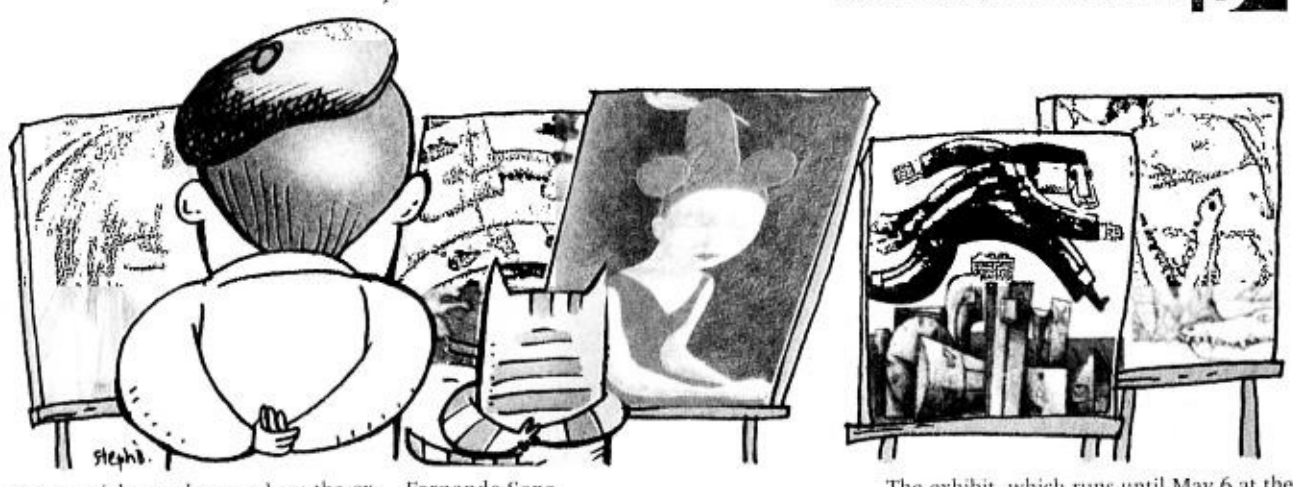
reative

once you do, it is well worth it. If you want to go another way, mosaic-making would be a good alternative. Just remember that the goal is to get your hands dirty.

See the masters in action

If learning all the theories don't get you far enough in your quest for artistic excellence, you might need to see how the experts do it.



"A Day with an Artist," an art workshop that invites young aspirants to observe some of the country's most well-known painters as they go about their work, goes a long way in inspiring young artists to better their craft. The event, which will be held at the fountain area of Greenbelt 3 on April 23 and 30, will feature landscape artist Romulo Galicano and still life painter Fernando Sena.

Galicano, recipient of a certificate of merit from the Portrait Society of America, opens the event on the 23rd while Sena takes over on the 30th. Pre-registration, at P350, is accepted at the Ayala Museum's Info desk.

The Wili and Doreen Fernandez collection entitled "Figures in Art" also aims to teach aspiring artists, but this time, with the human body as the subject.

The exhibit, which runs until May 6 at the De La Salle University museum, also features 10 new works from Tony Perez. Call 5244611 loc. 38.

Unless you're the reincarnation of Da Vinci, your creations probably won't go up for sale anytime soon. Heck, Van Gogh sold only one painting in his lifetime. But the thing with art is, there isn't a measuring stick for excellence. So just keep creating. Someday your work might just amount to something.

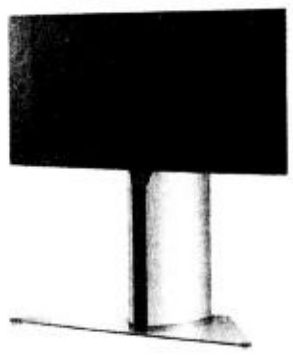
Award Winning Product

Samsung's 56-inch DLP rear projection TV has been a major hit not only for consumers worldwide but for award giving bodies as well. In particular, the SP56L7HX model received the Best Innovation Award in video at the International Consumer Electronics Show and a silver award from the Industrial Designers Society of America. The DLP™ TV is a unique product that mimics a flat panel TV with an innovative vertically positioned DLP™ Rocket Engine. The 2500:1 contrast ratio delivers stunning image quality and sharpness with Samsung's latest proprietary image enhancement technology DNIe. Since its release, the SP56L7HX has drawn interest in various global markets underlining the product's superb functions and design.

Best Innovation Award 2004

IDEA Design Award Silver Winner 2004

European Video Award 2004-2005



Only the Best for the Best

Only recently, the award-winning DLP™ technology has once again been selected to showcase at the recently concluded 77th Annual Academy Awards at the Kodak Theatre in Los Angeles last Feb. 27th. This has been the sixth consecutive year that DLP technology has served as the preferred display technology at the world's most popular awards ceremony.

There were a total of 10 Samsung 56" DLP TVs that provided high-definition picture clarity of the presentations and acceptance speeches. The Samsung DLP TVs, the industry's top selling line of DLP TVs, gave nominees, presenters and attendees the ability to view the show from multiple locations, including: the green room, the VIP room, and the lobby areas inside the Kodak Theatre.

The Academy Awards is one of the most highly-watched events of the year, entertaining millions of movie-lovers worldwide. The Samsung DLP rear projectors TVs as well gave the live theater audience an engaging visual experience throughout that Oscars night.

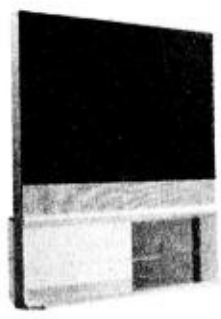
The Ultimate Home Theater Experience

Nowadays, the television is no longer the old "idiot box" sitting silently inside the living room. Television is now the centerpiece, a living testament of a grander multimedia experience that includes theater-like surround sound capability and hi-definition home viewing.

Samsung's HD broadcast-ready digital DLP TV models are the slimmest and lightest micro displays ideal for today's homes. The low lamp requirement means longer life, constantly producing vivid colors, high contrasts and sharp display. Its lightweight, shallow depth and innovative tabletop design is future proof with over 100,000 hours of reliability. Plus, the easy-to-replace projector lamp recovers performance level up to 98%.

Now, with all these latest intelligent technologies packed into one outstanding visual device, the Samsung DLP rear projector TV is the perfect complement for today's home entertainment system.

Isn't it about time to bring home a Samsung DLP TV and let your family have the ultimate home theater experience?



DLP technology vs. LCD PJ technology

There are several advantages of DLP™ technology as compared to what LCD projection TV could offer. For instance, DLP has a faster response time when it comes to active moving picture- generating up to a 100 times faster than LCD projection TV. DLP is not susceptible to BURN-IN from stationary images, in turn delivering a superb constant video performance at any given time.

DLP's high contrast reflective mirrors emanating from a large active area creates seamless film-like image reproduction while LCD projection TV's low contrast reflective mirrors coming from a low active area are often grainy and pixilated producing low-quality moving images.

DLP is digital, which is another advantage of this technology, giving precise control eliminating its vulnerability to environmental changes. Unlike LCD projection TV, which is analog, atmospheric changes like temperature, vibration, heat, and humidity can variably cause deterioration in image quality output over time. This will never happen under DLP.

The bright and real color reproduction is produced by an efficient enhanced optical engine. And with the help of a simple single chip optical design and low light requirement, DLP extends the lamp's life even longer. In contrast, LCD projection TV's transmissive design loses more light and absorbs more heat degrading performance in the long run. The design too, requires a brighter lamp to reflect images.

The DMD chip, the processor that controls images on DLP TVs, has a semi-permanent life of up 3 to 5 years. Changing the lamp will refresh the picture quality up to 98%, making your DLP TV like new again.

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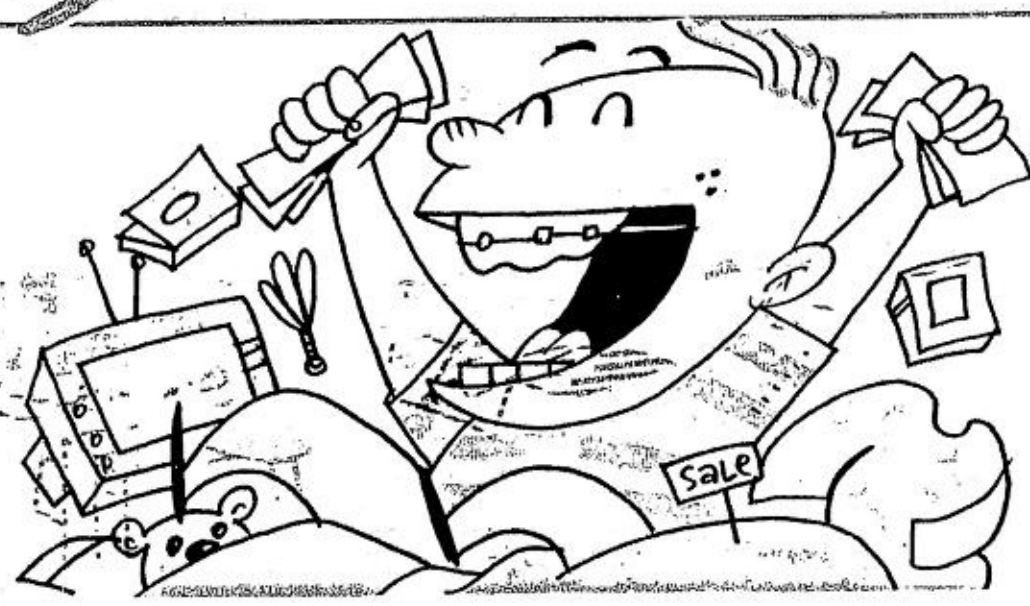


ILLUSTRATIONS BY STEPH BRAVO

Whether you need funds for a day at the beach or for a shopping spree in June, here's your guide to generating cash this summer

By Gmeleen Faye B. Tomboc
2be! Correspondent

SUMMER=no money? Not necessarily.

Asking for cash from your parents might seem like an easy way out, but wouldn't it be more fun if you could make your own? Whether you need funds for a day at the beach or for a shopping spree in June, here's your guide to earning cash this summer:

Work with what you have

If your mom has been bugging you to clean out your closet, have a garage sale. Offer to clean out your siblings' and parents' closets too, so you can have more things to sell.

For more fun, team up with other friends who have old clothes and toys to sell. Hang flyers around your subdivision and tell your household help to spread the word. For unsold merchandise, try selling at the public market, or sell them to a junk shop.

Conduct a summer workshop for kids. If you've got good grades in Math, offer remedial or advanced lessons in Algebra. You can also teach piano, guitar, acting or singing. You can even teach English to Koreans.

Announce your business via flyers around your neighborhood. Hang advertisements in bulletin boards in your church or at the supermarket. Put your e-groups and Friendster accounts to good use by posting messages about your services. The more kids in your class, the better for you because you'd be earning more for the same effort.

If you're good with animals, offer pet grooming services. Bathe and style your neighbors' poodles. Use a clipper to trim their nails. Remember to put a muzzle on the dogs before you start so you won't get bitten.

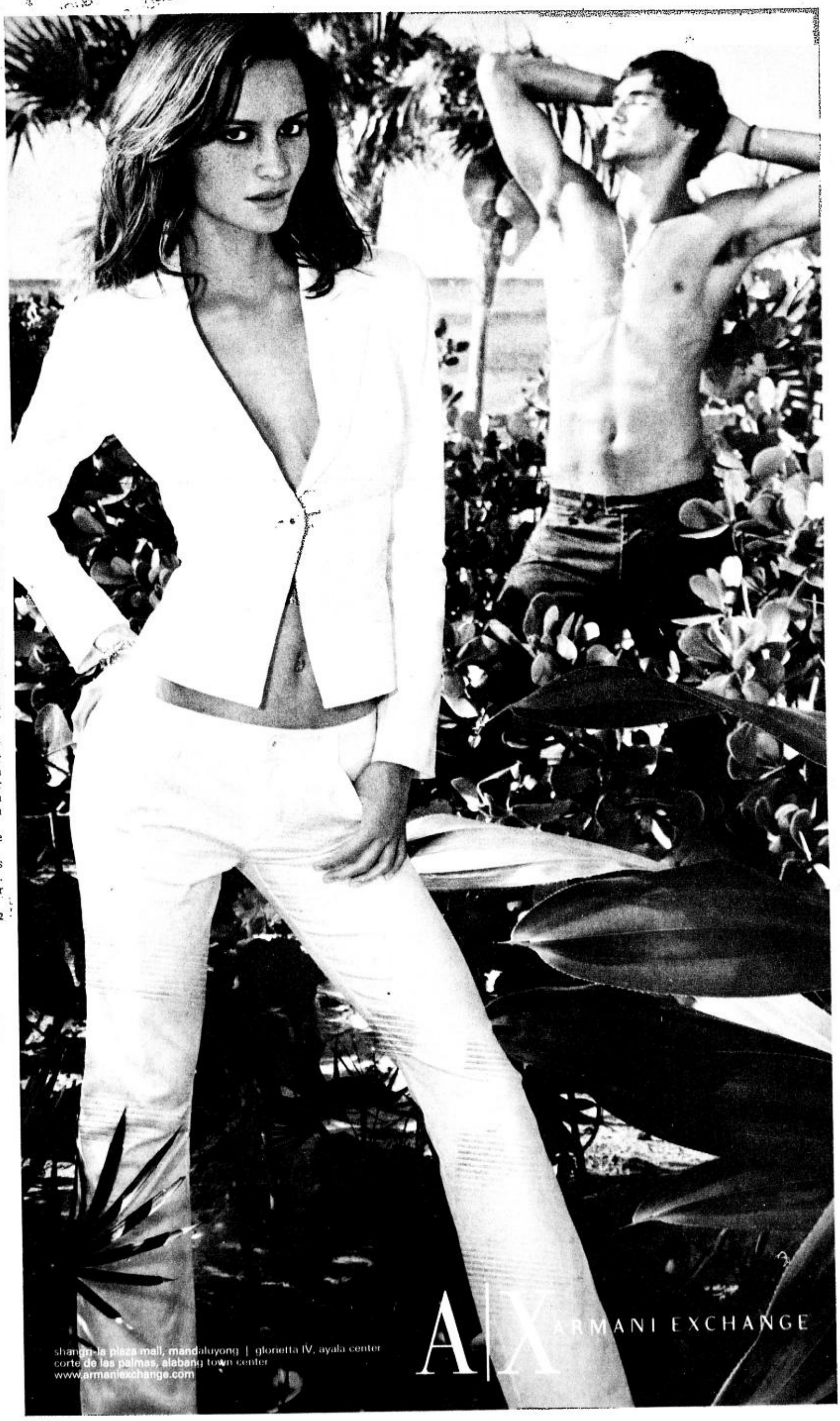
Also, offer "pet-sitting" services. Some people going out of town for a weekend would want to leave their pets in good hands. You can come over to their houses and feed their cats and dogs twice a day. If you have a large yard and plenty of space, you can even have a "pet-hotel" at your house. Bring over the pets to your house (preferably in their cages). Be sure your parents agree, and ensure that your own dogs won't fight with your "guests."

Got a large DVD or pocketbook collection? Rent them out to your neighbors. Ditto for comic books and magazines. Label them properly so they won't get mixed up with your neighbors' things, and carefully list down who borrowed what so you can hunt down your stuff.

Variation: Rent out your Magic Sing by the hour for fiestas and birthdays.

Don't let your CD-writer sit idly by this summer. Advertise your CD-burning business. Burn music or picture CDs as souvenirs for weddings and reunions.

EARN/ E2



Go for glam

Have you ever wanted to be on the fashion pages of 2bU!? Well, here's your chance

By Bianca Consunji
2bU! Correspondent

Become a fashion designer

LaSalle College International, a Canada-based design school, offers 42-hour fashion programs this summer. They are the following:

1. Patternmaking: Handled by designer Grace Paguila, a graduate of Fashion Design from LaSalle College International. Courses include Getting to Know the Tools, Taking Measurements, Manipulation of Skirt Block and Creation of Other Skirt Styles.

2. Draping: Handled by designer Christine Munda, a graduate of Fashion Design from Fashion Institute of Design and Merchandising, Los Angeles, CA, USA. The draping of fabrics on the dress is a method that is used to create three-dimensional designs, which will ultimately translate into finished garments. Courses include Intro to Draping, Preparation of Style Form and Draping of Basic Bodice, Skirt, Collars, etc.

3. Fashion Illustration: Handled by Percy Cainglet, a graduate of AB Communication Arts, University of the East, who is also a graphic and fashion illustrator, fashion, stage, property and costume designer and digital photographer. Courses include quick geometrical fashion figure, quick sketching (character illustration and vogue illustration), color rendering and different hairstyles with matching accessories.

Classes are held every Saturday, from April 23-June 4, from 9 a.m.-4 p.m.

LaSalle College International is at Bloomingdale Building, 205 Salcedo Street, Legaspi Village, Makati City. Call 8401476, 8401543 or 8401498. Visit www.clasalle.com/manila

Model for 2bU!

Have you ever wanted to be on the fashion pages of 2bU? Now's your chance—we'll be holding a screening for models on April 3, from 1-5 p.m. at the INQUIRER office on Chino Roces Avenue corner Yague and Mascardo Sts., Makati.

Requirements:

- Must be 14-25 years old, male or female
- Relatively good skin and body
- No height requirement—just be photogenic and well-proportioned
- Must be easy to work with

Please bring your set cards or one close-up and one full shot, and your portfolio, if any. Modeling experience is a plus, but not a requirement. We are also looking for "real" models—regular Janes and Joes who are attractive and photogenic.

Agents, stage parents and other entities that may distract the proceedings are advised not to show up. E-mail bcbianca@gmail.com or call 0917-4130100. You may also e-mail your photos and stats to the same address in case you cannot make it to the screening, but we will prioritize those who can come in person. *With reports from Kristine Ching*

YOU, too, can be a fairy. This image is from 2bU!'s Halloween pictorial.

Do-it-yourself logo tees

Make a summer statement with these T-shirts

Text and photos by Angela V. Ignacio
2bU! Correspondent

TIRED of sporting the usual printed tees like everyone else? Two years ago, graphic artists-cum-bandmates Bliss Mabini and Patrick Co felt the same way. Unable to find unique but inexpensive shirts for their band, they started making their own wacky logos and designs. Thus, Soaptees was born.

This summer, you can make your own printed tees as Bliss shows 2bU! how it's done using the silkscreen method. And guess what? It's actually not as hard as you might think!

Materials

Printed design
Silk screen
Squeegee/ plastic spatula
Bond paper
Plain T-shirt
Fabric paint

1. To make your own screen, stencil a design on paper then trace and cut it on a sheet of transparency film. Stick it on a silk screen with a wooden frame. Or if you want, you can also look for a local print shop to do the screen for you.

2. On a flat surface, smoothen the wrinkles on the shirt and put a sheet of plain bond paper inside it so the paint doesn't seep through the other side.

3. Place the screen on top of the shirt. Make sure that the screen is properly aligned and placed in the middle.

4. Carefully pour paint onto one side of the screen, then spread evenly across the design. Let the shirt dry for a full day so the paint fumes will evaporate.

Voila! You can now make as many funky shirts as you want!

Visit www.soaptees.com.

E-mail the author at aoshi_no_miko@atenista.net

FINISHED products

Earn some dough

From page E1

Get a summer job

Of course you can get a job at Jollibee or McDonald's. But for more variety, try resorts, summer camps and review centers. These places will be especially busy this summer and will need extra help.

Ask your *titos* and *titas* if their offices hire summer interns. If it's not too late, visit your school placement office to ask about openings this summer.

If you live in a tourist area, conduct your own guided tours a la Discovery Channel. Ask out-of-town friends and relatives to refer their colleagues and friends to you. Hire a van or drive your own car, and take your guests around your area. Regale them with interesting local stories and trivia that only natives know, and take them to less frequented areas that are not normally found in brochures.

Be ready with calling cards to hand out so they can refer you to their friends. For that extra edge, give them home-baked local delicacies or hand-made small souvenirs at the end of the day.

City-slickers can organize a summer camp or a day trip to a farm for kids. Have a fun-filled day bird watching, rappelling or wall-climbing. Teach them skills like fire-building and cooking.

Be sure to team up with two or three athletic and patient friends for help, because you wouldn't want to handle 20 whining kids by yourself.

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Set up shop at a bazaar/*tiangge*. Concentrate on crafts and goodies that you've made yourself so you can set yourself apart from the usual wares. If not, you can always stick to tried-and-tested summer bestsellers like flip-flops, board shorts and cheap shades.

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Put up a poster at your house, and wait for customers to buy. This works best if lots of people pass by your house.

So when summer rolls around, don't fret. With a little luck and a lot of hard (but fun) work, summer equals money. Who knows, that summer job or business you'll start may grow into a full-time career later.

Email the author at gmeleen@lycos.com

Go for glam

Have you ever wanted to be on the fashion pages of 2bU!? Well, here's your chance

By Bianca Consunji
2bU! Correspondent

Become a fashion designer

LaSalle College International, a Canada-based design school, offers 42-hour fashion programs this summer. They are the following:

1. Patternmaking: Handled by designer Grace Paguila, a graduate of Fashion Design from LaSalle College International. Courses include Getting to Know the Tools, Taking Measurements, Manipulation of Skirt Block and Creation of Other Skirt Styles.

2. Draping: Handled by designer Christine Munda, a graduate of Fashion Design from Fashion Institute of Design and Merchandising, Los Angeles, CA, USA. The draping of fabrics on the dress is a method that is used to create three-dimensional designs, which will ultimately translate into finished garments. Courses include Intro to Draping, Preparation of Style Form and Draping of Basic Bodice, Skirt, Collars, etc.

3. Fashion Illustration: Handled by Percy Cainglet, a graduate of AB Communication Arts, University of the East, who is also a graphic and fashion illustrator, fashion, stage, property and costume designer and digital photographer. Courses include quick geometrical fashion figure, quick sketching (character illustration and vogue illustration), color rendering and different hairstyles with matching accessories.

Classes are held every Saturday, from April 23-June 4, from 9 a.m.-4 p.m.

LaSalle College International is at Bloomingdale Building, 205 Salcedo Street, Legaspi Village, Makati City. Call 8401476, 8401543 or 8401498. Visit www.clasalle.com/manila

Model for 2bU!

Have you ever wanted to be on the fashion pages of 2bU? Now's your chance—we'll be holding a screening for models on April 3, from 1-5 p.m. at the INQUIRER office on Chino Roces Avenue corner Yague and Mascardo Sts., Makati.

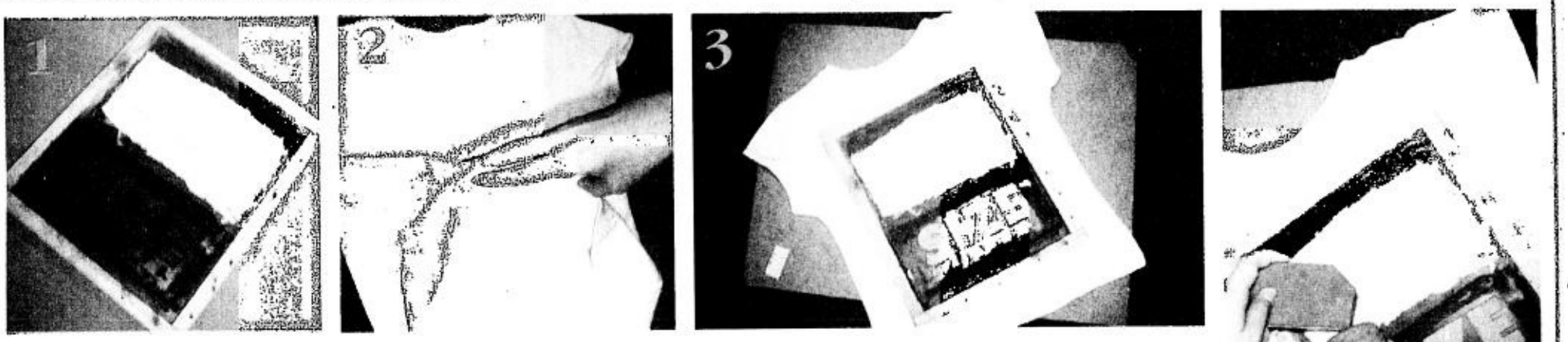
Requirements:

- Must be 14-25 years old, male or female
- Relatively good skin and body
- No height requirement—just be photogenic and well-proportioned
- Must be easy to work with

Please bring your set cards or one close-up and one full shot, and your portfolio, if any. Modeling experience is a plus, but not a requirement. We are also looking for "real" models—regular Janes and Joes who are attractive and photogenic.

Agents, stage parents and other entities that may distract the proceedings are advised not to show up. E-mail bcbianca@gmail.com or call 0917-4130100. You may also e-mail your photos and stats to the same address in case you cannot make it to the screening, but we will prioritize those who can come in person. *With reports from Kristine Ching*

YOU, too, can be a fairy. This image is from 2bU!'s Halloween pictorial.



Do-it-yourself logo tees

Make a summer statement with these T-shirts

Text and photos by Angela V. Ignacio
2bU! Correspondent

TIRED of sporting the usual printed tees like everyone else? Two years ago, graphic artists-cum-bandmates Bliss Mabini and Patrick Co felt the same way. Unable to find unique but inexpensive shirts for their band, they started making their own wacky logos and designs. Thus, Soaptees was born.

This summer, you can make your own printed tees as Bliss shows 2bU! how it's done using the silkscreen method. And guess what? It's actually not as hard as you might think!

Materials

Printed design
Silk screen
Squeegee/ plastic spatula
Bond paper
Plain T-shirt
Fabric paint

1. To make your own screen, stencil a design on paper then trace and cut it on a sheet of transparency film. Stick it on a silk screen with a wooden frame. Or if you want, you can also look for a local print shop to do the screen for you.

2. On a flat surface, smoothen the wrinkles on the shirt and put a sheet of plain bond paper inside it so the paint doesn't seep through the other side.

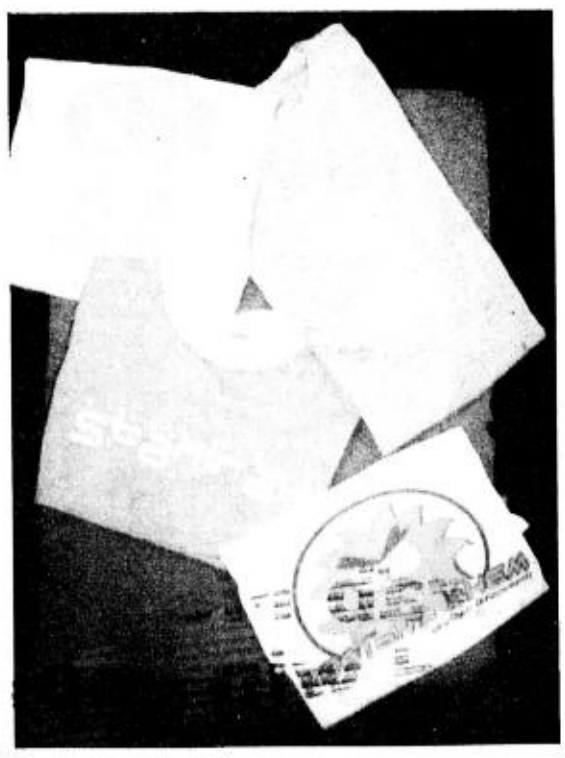
3. Place the screen on top of the shirt. Make sure that the screen is properly aligned and placed in the middle.

4. Carefully pour paint onto one side of the screen, then spread evenly across the design. Let the shirt dry for a full day so the paint fumes will evaporate.

Voila! You can now make as many funky shirts as you want!

Visit www.soaptees.com.

E-mail the author at aoshi_no_miko@atenista.net



FINISHED products

Earn some dough

From page E1

Get a summer job

Of course you can get a job at Jollibee or McDonald's. But for more variety, try resorts, summer camps and review centers. These places will be especially busy this summer and will need extra help.

Ask your *titos* and *titas* if their offices hire summer interns. If it's not too late, visit your school placement office to ask about openings this summer.

If you live in a tourist area, conduct your own guided tours a la Discovery Channel. Ask out-of-town friends and relatives to refer their colleagues and friends to you. Hire a van or drive your own car, and take your guests around your area. Regale them with interesting local stories and trivia that only natives know, and take them to less frequented areas that are not normally found in brochures.

Be ready with calling cards to hand out so they can refer you to their friends. For that extra edge, give them home-baked local delicacies or hand-made small souvenirs at the end of the day.

City-slickers can organize a summer camp or a day trip to a farm for kids. Have a fun-filled day bird watching, rappelling or wall-climbing. Teach them skills like fire-building and cooking.

Be sure to team up with two or three athletic and patient friends for help, because you wouldn't want to handle 20 whining kids by yourself.

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Email the author at gmeleen@lycos.com

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Have a beauty-full SUMMER!

Start a beauty regime this summer

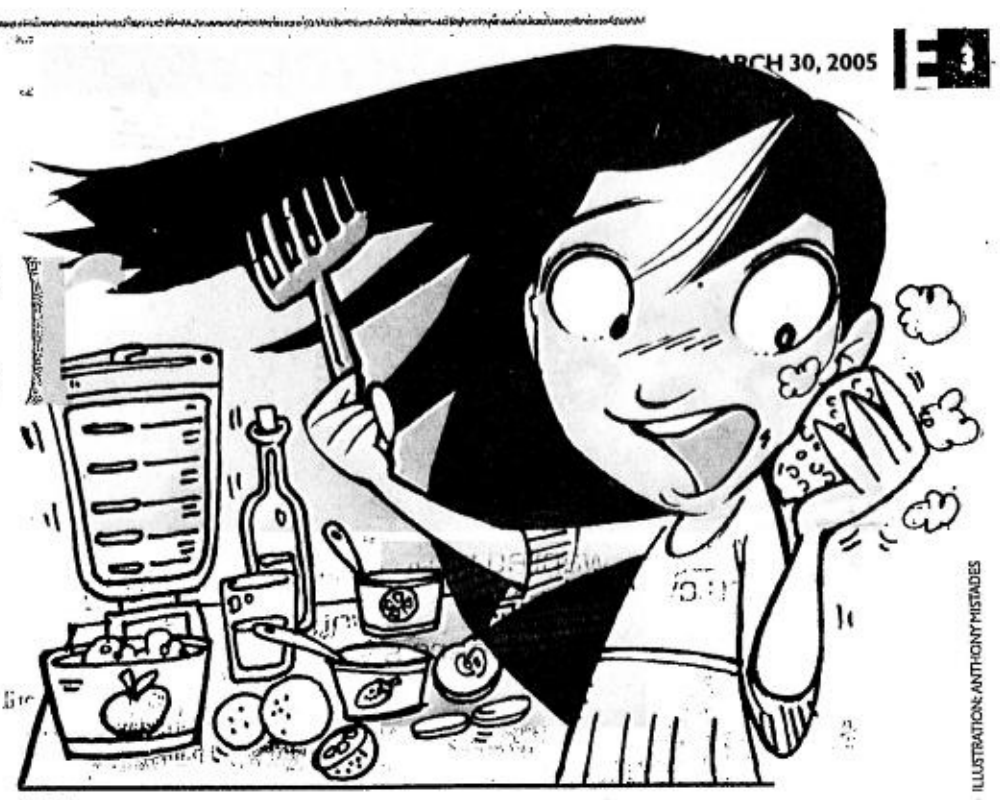

ILLUSTRATION: ANTHONY MISTADES

By Bianca Consunji
2bU! Correspondent

SUMMER'S the perfect time to try out all the new products you've been wanting to get for the longest time, now that you don't have term papers to worry about. (Also, just in case your experiments with makeup or skincare don't turn out so well, not as many people will see the disastrous results.) Check out the list of things you can do to get the *kikay* in you alive and kicking.

1. Do you simply slap on some foundation and lipstick before heading out the door? Are you sure you're getting the right shades of makeup? Let the pros teach you how to do things correctly—top cosmetic brands Shu Uemura and Shiseido will be holding beauty workshops to teach you the basics of makeup application and skincare.

Call Shu Uemura at 8133739 loc. 220 (Makati) or 6334636 loc. 120 (Ortigas) for workshop schedules.

Shiseido's workshops will be held on April 8 at My Beauty Hub 6750, April 16 at the Glorietta 4 branch, and April 23 at the Power Plant branch. Call 7527909 (6750), 7527307 (Glorietta 4), and 8981615 (Power Plant).

2. Create your own spa. Spas can get pretty expensive (especially if you don't receive an allowance during the summer.) Whip up your own pampering treatments—all it takes is a lot of fresh fruit, aromatherapy oils, rock salt and some ingenuity. Don't know where to start? Check out these recipes to start your home spa:

Cucumber Facial

1 cucumber
½ tsp lemon juice
1 tsp witch hazel (you can buy this in any drug store)
1 egg white, beaten until fluffy.

Peel the cucumber and run it through a blender or a food processor.

Pour the cucumber pulp into a colander or strainer and force it through, catching the liquid that comes out in a bowl underneath.

Combine the cucumber liquid with lemon juice and witch hazel. Stir and add the beaten egg white gently. Leave on for 15-25 minutes, then rinse off.

Peach Tightening Mask

1 peach, ripe, peeled, pitted
1 egg white

Whip the peach and egg white together in a blender until smooth. Gently pat the mixture all over your face. Leave on for 30 minutes, then rinse off with cool water.

Apple Mask

(for normal skin)
1 apple, cored and quartered
2 tbsp honey

Drop the apple pieces into a food processor and chop. Add honey and refrigerate for 10 minutes. Pat the mixture onto your face with a light tapping motion, tapping until the honey feels tacky. Leave it on for 30 minutes and then rinse.

Cucumber Mask

(for oily skin)
½ cucumber
1 egg white
1 tbsp lemon juice
1 tsp mint

Puree everything and refrigerate for 10 minutes. Apply the mixture to your face and leave it on for 15 minutes. Rinse with warm, then cool water.

Strawberry mask

½ c ripe strawberries
¼ c cornstarch

Mix strawberries and cornstarch together to make a paste and apply it to your face, avoiding the delicate area around your eyes. Leave on for 30 minutes and then rinse it off with cool water.

Mask for blemished skin

1 tomato, ripe, chopped
1 tsp lemon juice
1 tbsp oatmeal

Blend everything until combined. Apply to skin, making sure the mixture is thick enough to stay on blemished areas. If necessary, add a bit more oatmeal to thicken the mask. Leave on for 10 minutes, then scrub off with a clean washcloth dipped in warm water.

(All recipes are courtesy of http://www.coolnurse.com/facials.htm)

3. Invest in hair-care tools. As we've mentioned earlier, summer is the best time to experiment on your appearance. If you didn't have time to play around with your hair earlier, then play around with curls, pin-straight locks, buns, braids, waves, dreadlocks, beehives, Star Wars hairstyles... The list goes on and on, and the only way to find the style that really suits you is by experimenting. If you can, get the following tools to make your styling easier:

- Hair dryer
- Flat iron (do not get the cheap metal ones found in the *tiangges*. They will only burn your hair without making it noticeably straighter.) Try the ceramic flatirons—they do less damage to the hair.
- Curling tools such as benders, hot rollers, Velcro rollers, or a curling iron.
- Hair products. These are important if you plan to subject your hair to all sorts of twisting and turning—not only will they help you shape your hair, they will also protect your locks from heat styling. The basics include mousse, shine serum, leave-on conditioners, styling paste or gel, and hair spray.

4. Change your hairstyle for the summer. We don't recommend you to go and shave your head, but try getting a new hairstyle or hair color—believe us, it does wonders. And try to go to a reputable hairdresser so you won't be filled with pangs of regret upon looking at the mirror. Try these salons for a fab 'do:

- Kaizen Salon at The Courtyard, 26 Sgt. Esguerra St., South Triangle, Q.C. tel. 9285588. (It also has branches at Alabang, Boracay, and L.A.) Look for Jude Hipolito.
- Prive II Salon, Westlife Place, 107 West Ave., Q.C. Tel no. 3746846
- Basecut Salon, Jupiter Street corner Galaxy Street, Bel-Air Village, Makati (8983359) and 58 E. Rodriguez Jr. Ave, Libis, Q.C. Call 6870209.
- Salon de Manila. Call 8175377 (Legaspi Village, Makati), 7326014 (Banawe Street, Sta. Mesa Heights), 4379796 (Katipunan), 8886651 (Salcedo Village, Makati), and 3739510 (Tomas Morato)
- Azta Urban Salon at Unit 12, Metrowalk Commercial Complex, Meralco Ave., Ortigas. Call 6317915.
- Capelli Salon Café (near ABS-CBN), tel. 4161728-30

5. Start an exercise regimen. Yes, this is related to beauty, not just fitness and health. Getting a bit of exercise in your system will do wonders for your circulation—and not to mention, your complexion. Don't worry about getting your powder caked with sweat and let your skin breathe by not wearing any makeup for an entire day (some girls cannot leave the house without wearing powder).

It is also a good idea to start a healthy diet, now that the need for coffee isn't as great as it was during the time of term papers.

Introduce more fruit and vegetables into your diet—with a regular amount of tomato juice and exercise, you wouldn't be reaching for that lip and cheek tint as much. Sure, it's always fun to play around with makeup, but it's even better to show people that you don't depend on it—besides, the pretty makeup colors look better if you have good skin to begin with. Remember, no amount of foundation or concealer could ever cover a bad complexion.

E-mail the author at biancaconsunji@yahoo.com

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COMPLICATED | complicated
I'M WITH YOU | imwithu
SIMPLE PLAN | PERFECT | perfect
WELCOME TO MY LIFE | welcome2mylife
SHUT UP | spshutup
RINGBACK
ARTIST | SONG TITLE | KEYWORD
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Summer guide for geeks

Computer games, pulp novels, 'Star Wars'' prequel promise a very entertaining summer

By Javier Mata
2bU! Correspondent

THERE was a time when being a geek was considered a humiliation. Those days are over because geeks these days are not only proud about their tastes but with a plethora a videogames, books and movies available, there is no better time to be one with all the wonderful toys we have at our disposal. Here is a little taste of what this summer should be for us with a little cash and more than a little child within us.

Devil May Cry 3: Dante's Awakening

Yes! Dante is back! Featuring fun gameplay, a great rock soundtrack and one of the coolest characters to ever come out in a videogame, the first Devil May Cry quickly became a favorite for Playstation 2 fans. The sequel was a bit of a disappointment, however, and left fans wondering if Dante could ever recover. I'm glad to say he has. The third installment has more than made up for its predecessor's flaws. Dante's tricks are cooler than ever and make "The Matrix" stunts look like kindergarten playground. Excellent combat system, stylized settings, funky music and a well-produced storyline makes this a great buy. The only complaint I have is that it is a tad difficult but hey, its not insurmountable... especially if you're Dante.

Brothers in Arms: Road to Hill 30

If you are a fan of World War II shooters like the Medal of Honor series and Call of Duty, then you're going to love this game. Loosely based on the true heroism of the 101st division, Brothers in Arms for the PC puts you in command of a squad of elite paratroopers as you take part in one of the most pivotal battles of the Second World War. Unlike FPS games, the emphasis is on squad strategy. The game punishes you for acting like Rambo and charging heedlessly... you have to be a responsible leader and command your squad so there is an element of strategy involved as you use your men wisely and try to keep them alive. The game is also one of the most realistic war games ever; it simulates battles with great accuracy.

Sid Meier's Pirates!

Okay... So this game has been out for awhile now but it's the perfect one to play this summer. A remake of a classic, Pirates! allows you to live the life of a pirate in the Caribbean—plundering enemy ships, hunting for buried treasure, dueling swords... and even wooing the governor's daughter (much like a certain hit movie starring Johnny Depp). The game features a series of simple yet engrossing videogame for each of the typical activities a pirate would normally do. The quirky and comedic graphical style also adds a light-hearted, family-friendly feel to it that would make it an easy hook for casual gamers while remaining deep enough for the more hardcore gamers. Arrgh!

Handhelds: Sony PSP and Nintendo DS

The next generation of portable games has just arrived as both Nintendo and Sony have shown the public what they have to offer gamers on the go.

Nintendo offers us the Nintendo DS, a nifty gadget that offers two unique innovations.

First, it has not one but two screens. Nintendo claims this opens up a wealth of possibilities as the interaction between the two screens is used by games (in racing games, for example, one screen could be the front while the other is the rear view mirror). The second innovation is that the screens are touch pads. How game developers will use the two features is anyone's guess, but imagination is a powerful thing.

Sony, on the other hand, has opted for a more traditional but more powerful handheld machine in the form of the PSP. The PSP is multipurpose: Not only does it play games, it plays music and movies as well. The prospects of both look very exciting and while games for both are still a bit scarce, the will soon change.

'Rites of the Dragon'

Published by White Wolf Inc., "Rites of the Dragon" is interesting. Based on "White Wolf's Vampire: The Requiem" product line, "Rites of the Dragon" is a "fictional autobiography" of Dracula himself as he tells his story and tries to solve the mystery of his vampiric existence as well as his quest to master it. The book is beautifully written and really gives you a compelling illusion that the Impaler himself is telling you his story.

Fans of "Vampire: The Requiem" would love this supplementary material to its macabre universe. Those who are not familiar with the series of books and role-playing game supplements will nevertheless find the book a unique interpretation of the world's most famous vampire.

'Star Wars Episode III: Revenge of the Sith'

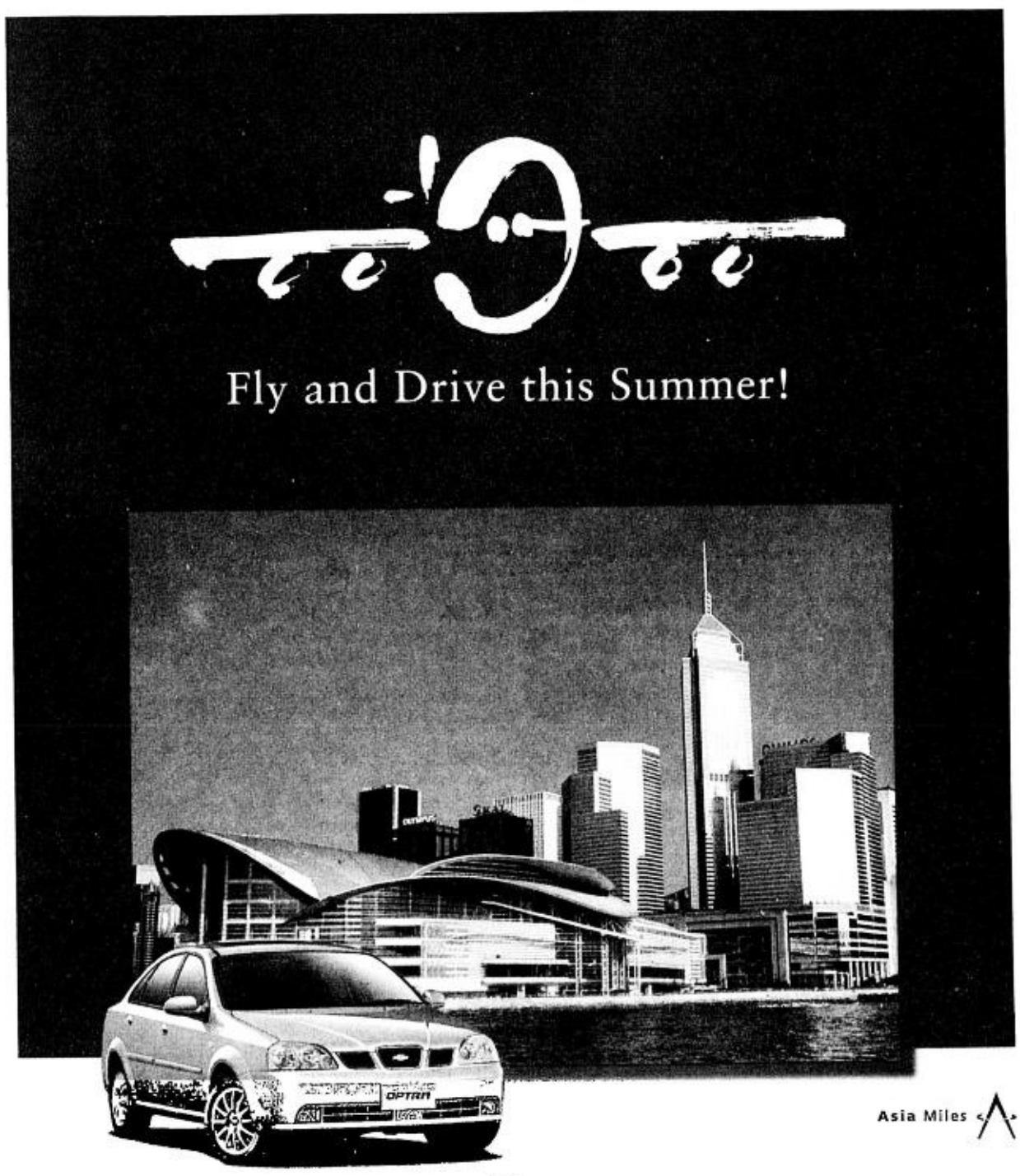
The third installment of the "Star Wars" prequel movies is almost upon us! Opening on May 19, the film will finally show us how the young Anakin Skywalker became the evil Darth Vader and brought about the rise of the Empire. George Lucas himself calls this one his "Titanic," so expect a dark and emotional movie that would finally tie the loose ends between the two trilogies.

Expect great special effects, the return of Chewbacca and the mother of all Lightsaber duels between Anakin and Obi-wan... and what a sight it would be to see the black armor again with the memorable and ominous heavy breathing.

www.orisinal.com

The site features some of the most original and sickeningly cute games ever created. The mini-games are bright, cute and addicting to play. The games are perfect for killing time while you wait for your ripped files to download (Shhh!).

You can also show this site to your girlfriend and prove that gamers can have a softer side as well (and hopefully lure her into taking the first baby steps into becoming a gamer herself).



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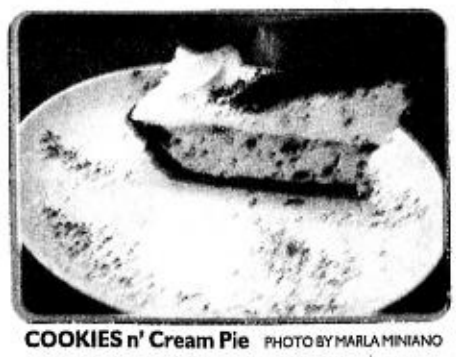
FROZEN Maki PHOTO BY MARLA MINIANO

SPAGHETTI Ice Cream PHOTO BY MARLA MINIANO



COOKIES n' Cream Pie PHOTO BY MARLA MINIANO

CHOCNUT Ice Cream PHOTO BY MYLES JAMITO

THE CHOCOLATE B

Cool comforts

By Marla Miniano and Angela Ignacio
2bU! Correspondents

'TIS the season for cool desserts! Before the heat starts frying your brain (and stomach), check out the delectable desserts we've picked for this sizzling season.

Congo Grille's Frozen Maki. Definitely one of the quirkier desserts we've ever stumbled upon, Frozen Maki has our unanimous vote for taste and presentation. It has vanilla ice cream instead of sticky rice, a sweet, chewy crust instead of seaweed, and hot chocolate sauce instead of soy sauce. Grab those chopsticks and indulge!

Uncle Stanly's Malacca Desserts. We discovered this little gem of a stall when we were hunting for something different to cool us off, and it's our sweetest find yet! Malacca Desserts offers various yummy combinations of fruit, jelly and other exotic-sounding toppings on a generous serving of shaved ice. Visit its two kiosks in Galleria and Greenhills and try the Mango and Crunchy Honey Pearls combo.

Floyd's Ice Cream Bar. This snack shop allows you to create your own dessert! Choose from the wide array of ice cream flavors and Smoosh-Ins (toppings like marshmallows, nuts, choco chips and waffle bits), mix everything up on the Floydstone (a frozen granite stone), top it off with whipped cream and syrup, and name your original concoction. This one, which we christened Leche Ka, is a mixture of Dulce Leche and Caramello ice cream, white choco chips, waffle bits, barquettes and caramel syrup. Also worth trying are the scrumptious ice cream cakes and pies (we loved the Cookies n' Cream Pie). Floyd's has branches in Eastwood and Greenhills.

Ice Monster. Okay, so this isn't exactly new, but Ice Monster still has our double thumbs-up. With its monstrous serving of fresh fruits and finely shaved ice, who can possibly resist it? Branches are popping up like daisies all over the metro, which proves that it's the ultimate snack to beat the heat.

The Old Spaghetti House's Spaghetti Ice Cream. A whole bowl of spaghetti-shaped vanilla ice cream is sure to bring out the kid in all of us. Complete with meat sauce (strawberry syrup), meatballs (Maltesers) and cheese (yellow candy sprinkles). TOSH is located in Katipunan, Salcedo Village in Makati and Bohol Avenue in Quezon City.

Unleash your ice cream-making abilities

By Marla Miniano
2bU! Correspondent

ICE CREAM genius Ian Carandang gave us a recipe featuring that beloved Pinoy sugar fix, Choc-Nut.

"This recipe will give you a richer and chunkier Choc-Nut ice cream than anything commercially available," he says. "Freezing the Choc-Nut helps the chunks maintain their shape in the ice cream, as the candy is notoriously crumbly."

Choc-Nut ice cream

1 package king-sized Choc-Nut (240 g, 24 pcs)
2 eggs
½ c plus 1 tbsp sugar
2 packages Nestle All-Purpose Cream
1 c milk

Set aside 1/3 of the package of Choc-Nut (8 pcs) and place in the freezer to harden.

Take the remaining Choc-Nut bars and crush with a fork in a mixing bowl. Add the sugar into the Choc-Nut and mix well, making sure the sugar and Choc-Nut are evenly distributed.

Beat the eggs and add into the sugar/Choc-Nut mixture and blend well. Add cream and milk.

Cook mixture in a saucepan under low for five minutes, or u begins to thicken.

Remove from heat room temperature.

Place mixture in ic freeze according to tions.

When ice cream is d frozen Choc-Nut and

LECHE Ka Ice Cream PHOTO BY MARLA MINIANO

LEARN to make your

Sweat it out, baby!

By: Saleema Devi Refran
2bU! Correspondent

SKECHERS Vigor

SUMMER isn't all about lying out and basking in the sun all day. Whether you're a true blue sportsman or just an aspiring athlete, check out 2bU!'s guide to help you get into sports.

Major league

Raring to try a new sport and with some cash to burn? There are quite a lot to choose from.

Join a Milo Sports Clinic. They're everywhere, you just need to check out a main road to find a big streamer on this. It's never too late to be the next Lydia de Vega or Monsour Del Rosario.

Give the word "take down" a different meaning. Learn Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu or Gracie Jiu-Jitsu and master the art of grappling. Now wrestling with your siblings will be a cinch. Head down to the Moro Lorenzo Sports Center at the Ateneo De Manila University campus in Katipunan or call 9277726 or 4251890.

If grappling isn't your thing, try Krav Maga. This is actually the official fighting system of the Israeli Defense Forces. It employs practical and easy to learn self-defense techniques that will take you out of any sticky situation. This battle-tested self-defense art (yes, not a martial art) has equipped hundreds of thousands of law enforcement personnel all over the world. Take a trip to the Krav Maga Phil. Training Center at the 2/F Asuncion Badminton Center in San Juan or call 7248455. You can also visit the website at www.krav-maga.ph.

Put grace into your martial arts. Learn the Brazillian art form Capoiera and incorporate gymnastics and dance into your routines. With dance and music in the mix, Capoeira has put enjoyment back into learning martial arts. Do impressive handstands and wow your friends with your flawless moves. This not only works well on the training mat but on the dance floor as well. (Tip: Break dancers have a greater sense of balance if they have some background in Capoeira.) Train under the Escola Brasileira De Capoeira Philippines at the Centro Flamenco, SJG Bldg., Kalayaan Ave., Makati. Or call Baby at 7512243 at Mojo Gym Panay Ave., Q.C., or 3736943/3736944. Visit the website at www.ebcphilippines.com.

Minor league

Not having enough cash doesn't mean you can't enjoy a sports-filled summer. Here's to a summer of enjoyment without burning a hole in your pocket.

For starters, why not join an inter-baranggay or inter-village basketball league? Round up the *barkada* and form your own dream team. If you still lack members, its high time you become friends with your neighbors. It won't hurt if you pull a surprise by having your best bud, who also happens to be UAAP player, play for your team.

Better yet, put up your own sports tournament. This is where having a lot of siblings and friends come in handy. Plan your entire summer with the activities you can do at home and out on your backyard. One week you can have a badminton meet, the next a scrabble or chess tournament. Be creative.

To make things even more exciting, pool your money together and have a tournament prize. You can also make your own medals and host an awarding ceremony-cum-end of summer party. Give out wacky awards like "Most Valuable Prayer" and "Rocky of the Year."

If flying solo is your trip, whip out your jogging suit and run around the subdivision. Bring along your discman to keep you company. Try simulating a marathon. Move up from the kid's 3K fun run to the really competitive ones.

In fact, why not practice for a triathlon? Swim some laps in the clubhouse pool and jump onto your bike. Drive by your house and leave your bike. Run back to the clubhouse and time yourself.

SWEAT/ F4

Simmering reads

By Anne Rose A. Elicaño and Catherine Young
2bU! Correspondents

ONE OF the best things about summer is that time seems so limitless. Whether you're a bookworm who wants to catch up on your reading or a beach bum who needs an interesting read while basking in the sun, now you have all the time to sit back and relax. Here are some good titles to check out.

'Love'

By Pablo Neruda
Miramax Books
Location: The beach

Reading vintage Neruda can add richness to a nice beach sunset or the wee hours of the morning as you chill out after a summer party.

Something about Pablo Neruda's poetry evokes fleeting mental scenes of seascapes and secluded Latin American shorelines. These are certainly some of the images stirred up by "Love," a compilation of 10 of Neruda's best poems, including the unforgettable "Tonight I Can Write…"

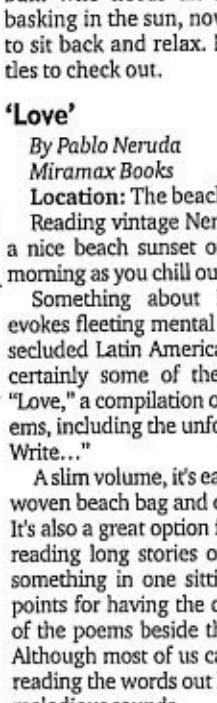
A slim volume, it's easy to slip this book into a woven beach bag and carry it wherever you go. It's also a great option for people who don't like reading long stories or who'd prefer finishing something in one sitting. This book gets plus points for having the original Spanish versions of the poems beside their English translations. Although most of us can't understand Español, reading the words out loud creates wonderfully melodious sounds.

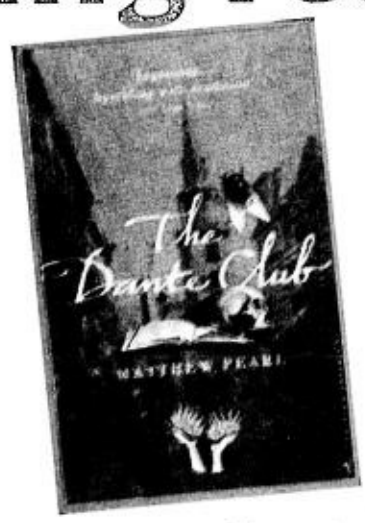
'Falling Off The Map'

By Pico Iyer
Random House Publishing
Location: At home

Where are you headed to this summer? If you're bound nowhere, you can always pick up a good travel/adventure book and just imagine yourself in another place.

Okay, that doesn't beat the thrill of really traveling, but at least it's cheaper and chicken flu-free. For starters, see some of the more interesting places of the world through the eyes of writer Pico Iyer.





Iyer, an essayist for Time magazine, recounts his experiences in the "lonely places" he has gone to in his travels. Lonely places are countries that seem to be cut off from the world because of their quirks, places that "are marching to the beat of a different satellite drummer."

Consider Australia, a former convict dumping ground, now one of the more peaceful and laidback places in this planet. Or Iceland, where modern terms such as "Internet" must be translated into Norse (one of the oldest languages in Europe).

In a nutshell, "Falling Off The Map" is an intriguing read guaranteed to make you both marvel and laugh. Perhaps it will make you even wonder if the Philippines should be part of the list of lonely places.

'The Dante Club'

By Matthew Pearl
Vintage Books, Random House Publishing
Location: A very long plane ride

It is 1865 in Boston and a group of scholars are in the process of writing the first American translation of Dante's "The Divine Comedy."

Oliver Wendell Holmes, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow and publisher J.T. Fields comprise this erudite and ambitious group. However, as they translate Dante's descent into Inferno, someone begins reenacting the scenes in the poem through a series of gruesome murders.

It is now a race against time to finish the translation and figure out who the next victim is. The protagonists then find out that each graphic murder coincides with their translation of each scene, leading to suspicions of complicity among people in their community.

Already hailed as the "new shining star of literary fiction" by Dan Brown, Pearl's web of intrigue and mystery will effortlessly while the hours away.

'Something Rotten'

By: Jasper Fforde
Hodder and Stoughton Publishing
Location: In line for a job interview

This is the fourth book in the Thursday Next series. In Jasper Fforde's strange '80s world where dodos exist, where people's identities can be eradicated and where Shakespeare characters can come to life, literary detective Thurs day Next has definitely grown from her days in "The Eyre Affair."

What better way to spend summer than to browse through the pages of books that complement the season?

Now the moth all names—Frid tween making s resolution classe the self-proclaim to be a fictional c

Her quest to "u den, to prevent who is cloning Sh for this heroine. mal. Make sure y though.

'Residence on

By Pablo Neru
Corporation
Location: Stu

A bookworm and is armed wi for nearsightedne where nearly eve thing to do, you yourself stuck in t next summer des

But no harm books, such as " Neruda. Poetry is Each poem is lon a few minutes, bu you can stop whe

"A Glass Half

By Felix Dennis
Location: Stu

For booklovers "A Glass Half Full er of Maxim ma work has been p speare Company

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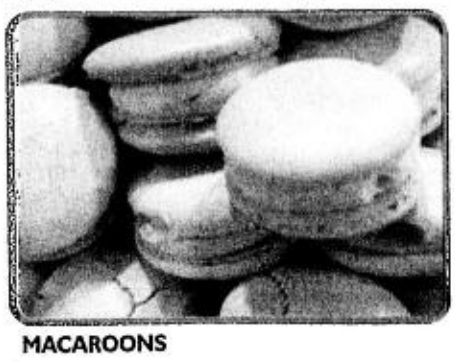
uffet

FOR YOUR sweet tooth


MACAROONS

A DOSE of chocolate

MORE goodies at the Chocolate Buffet

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size of the pieces is up to you) and mix into the Choc-Nut ice cream. Put the ice cream in the freezer and let it harden overnight.

Scoop and serve with barquillos or additional Choc-Nut for garnish. Enjoy!

Makes approximately one quart of ice cream.

Ian's other creations are available at Hotstix Barbecue, 1595 Quezon Avenue, QC. His bestsellers include White Chocolate Macadamia, Rocky Road Swirl, Butter Pecan, Bailey's Fudge and Toblerone Cheesecake. For orders and inquiries, e-mail icecreambarrel@hotmail .com or call 0917-4643397.

Strictly for Chocoholics

By Katrina Yap
2bu! Correspondent

Chocoholics, brace yourselves. The Manila Peninsula is bringing back its chocolate buffet!

Get ready to taste chocolate crepes, cakes, ice cream, truffles, drinks and more! Executive Pastry Chef Berndt Beitmann will serve chocolate in every imaginable form. Seventy percent of the menu is new, so if you loved the Chocolate Nights Buffet last year, you'll love this even better.

It's pricey at P495, but true chocolate lovers will definitely not pass up on this one. Get your fix of everything chocolate and eat to your heart's content beginning April 8.

The Chocolate Buffet will be held every Friday and Saturday night at The Lobby of the Manila Peninsula from 8:30 pm to 12 midnight. P495 for adults and P295 for kids, including coffee and tea. For reservations and inquiries, call 8872888.

Become your own chef

By Katrina Yap

While you might want to feast on everything we've shown you here, eating all you want this summer will surely take a toll on your body. So get busy and do something productive! We've found a compromise—cooking classes! This way, you can have your cake and eat it, too.

Vietnam and coffee

Café Ysabel's Center for Asian Culinary Studies offers a full range of courses in cooking, baking and pastry, wine, health and nutrition, and food business management. CACS also has one- to three-day recreational and business programs, which provide focused theme lessons for hobbyists. Classes begin this April.

Learn authentic Vietnamese recipes on April 4. Vietnamese Chef Nga Nguyen De Lemos will show you how to prepare dishes like Goi Ga (Chicken Salad), Bo Cuon (Beef Fresh Springroll), Bun Bo Xao (Fresh Noodles with Beef and Lemongrass) and Rau Muong Xao Thit Bo (Sautéed Kangkong with Beef). Course fee of P1,200 is inclusive of all ingredients.

And for coffee lovers, Chef Gene Gonzalez will teach "The Coffee Class 1 & 2" on April 9 and 10. Learn the basics of making proper and profitable cups of Americano, Espresso, Cappuccino, Lattés and more. It's reasonable at P3,000 for the two-day sessions.

The Center for Asian Culinary Studies and Café Ysabel Restaurant are located at 455 P. Guevarra Street, San Juan. Call 7255089 and 7269326, e-mail cafeysabel@mydestiny.net or visit www.cafeysabel.com

Viva Espanol!

Learn to cook paella the authentic, Spanish way with The San Miguel Pure Foods Culinary Center. Signor Juan Carlos de Terry, food connoisseur and owner of Terry Selection, will teach Spanish dishes on April 8 from 1:30 to 4:30 pm. It's a steal at only P700.

Classes for kids this summer are also available. Contact The San Miguel Pure Foods Culinary Center at 6719876 locals 402, 404 and 405. Early registration and payment are required. Limited slots available. The San Miguel Pure Foods Culinary Center is located at Legaspi corner Eagle Sts., Barrio Ugong, Pasig City.

Culinary and baking courses

Are you a novice chef or simply a culinary hobbyist who wants to professionalize cooking and baking skills? The Center for Culinary Arts has courses and classes just for you every weekend beginning April 16.

April 16 (Saturday)
Food Safety and Sanitation, Product Identification, Quantity Food Production
April 17 (Sunday)
Cooking Methods 1 (Soups, Stocks, Butchery and Basic Knife Skills)
April 23 (Saturday)
Cooking Methods 2 (Starches & Grains)
April 24 (Sunday)
Cooking Methods 3 (Vegetable Cookery)
April 30 (Saturday)
Basic Breads
May 7 (Saturday)
Basic Pastries
May 8 (Sunday)
Basic Cakes
May 14 (Saturday)
Garde Manger
May 15 (Sunday)
Chinese Cuisine
May 21 (Saturday)
Japanese Cuisine
May 22 (Sunday)
Filipino Cuisine
May 28 (Saturday)
Thai and Vietnamese Cuisine
May 29 (Sunday)
American Cuisine
June 4 (Saturday)
Italian Cuisine
June 5 (Sunday)
French Cuisine

Classical cooking and baking

If you're new to cooking, don't fret. CCA will also offer the basics to teens 14 to 17 years old. In this five-day course, they will learn basic cooking principles such as moist and dry heat cookery, and baking basics such as making yeast bread and a variety of pastries.

Classical cooking and baking schedules are to be announced. The Center for Culinary Arts, Manila, is located at 287 Katipunan Ave., Loyola Heights, Quezon City. Call 4264840 to 41 or visit www.cca-manila.com.

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with stanzas short enough so
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by Felix Dennis. This publish-
gazine is also a poet whose
resented by the Royal Shake-

about this book? It has a spo-
you can still indulge in litera-
ring the open road.

ors at elicano_ar@yahoo.com
@yahoo.com

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Sweat it out, baby!

From page F2

Who knows, you could be the country's next best triathlete.

What to wear

Summer isn't summer if you don't get to spend in style. Make sure you have the highest SPF lotion you can get your hands on before you go out in the sun.

2bU! Recommends Coppertone Sport in SPF 30 and the Hawaiian Tropic Oil Free Sunblock in SPF 50+.

2bU! also loves Aqualeisure mask, snorkel and fin combo. Don't forget your swim cap, ear plug and nose clip. So what if you're not an Olympic swimmer? These US-made products can make you look like one.

Before you go running out for that marathon training or shoot some hoops with the boys, make sure you have a good pair of rubber shoes. Try Skechers Vigor in Navy or Pony LGA Hoop Crash Mid in White.

Be it smashing shuttlecocks in a badminton court or spiking balls at the clubhouse volleyball court, girls can enjoy their sport and be fashionable at the same time with Skechers Vigor-Ambitions in Red or in Gray-Pink.

Athlete or no athlete, summers are meant to be enjoyed. So soak up the sun and flex those muscles for a healthier you before classes start in June!

With reports from Niño Mark Sablan, Cheryl Tiu and Bianca Consunji

Hot, hot sounds

CATCH Cambio's rocking gigs this summer.

Text and photos by Maui V. Reyes

SAVE up your allowance and work extra hard at that summer job of yours—there are CDs to be bought and concerts to be seen!

Music events

The majors

What: Pulp Summer Slam 2005

When: April 30

Where: Amoranto Stadium, A. Roces Avenue, Quezon City.

Who: The usual suspects—Bamboo, POT, Greyhounds, Kapatid, Chicosci, etc.

Why you should go: For P180, you get a free slice of pizza, Pepsi X and Red Horse. Plus you get to enjoy rubbing bodies with sweaty rockers (that is, if that's your kind of thing...)

What: Avril Lavigne Bones Tour

When: March 31, 8 p.m.

Where: Fort Bonifacio Global City

Who: Avril Lavigne with Simple Plan

Why you should go: It's the perfect kick-off for summer. That is, if you like pop-punk.

What: NU 107.5's "Himaya"

When: April 2

Where: To be announced (tune in to NU 107.5 for more details)

Who: Female-fronted bands like Imago, Color it Red, The Late Isabel, Narda, etc.

Why you should go: This is NU's way of saluting women in rock. With a carnival-like setup, the concert will also offer body piercing, body painting, tarot card and poetry readings, interpretative dance, and a whole lot of trinkets to be bought at stalls surrounding the event.

What: NU 107's Summer Shebang

When: April 23

Where: Island Cove, Cavite

Who: The Dawn, Radioactive Sago Project, Sponge Cola, <s>andwich and a whole lot more.

Why you should go: Because it's an all-day concert and everyone loves a road trip.

What: NU 107.5's Sundown Sessions

When: April 8, 5 p.m.

Where: Kapalua Baywalk, Manila

Who: Ska and reggae bands

Why you should go: Listen to ska and reggae bands while the sun goes down.

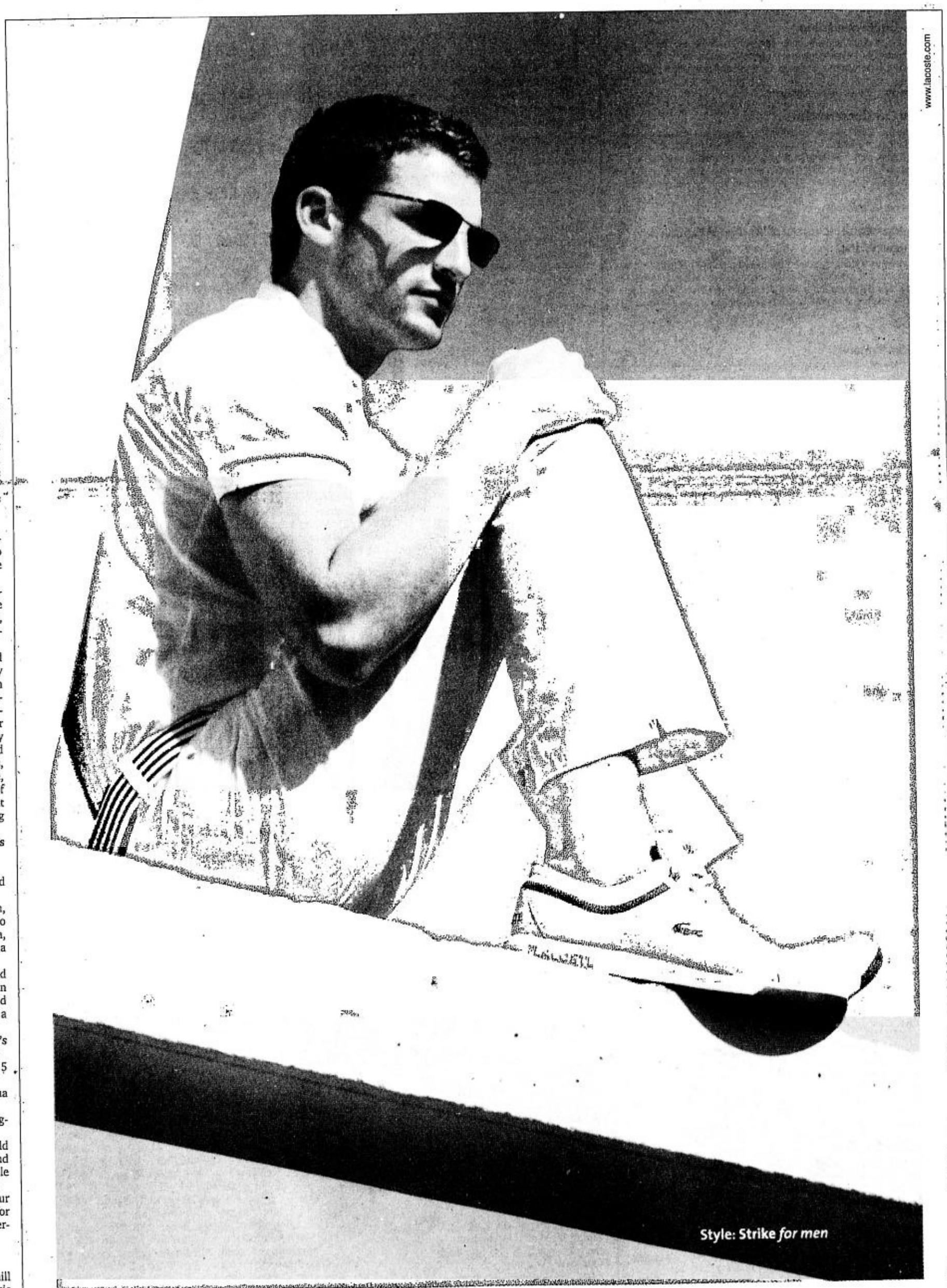
Tune in to your fave stations for more summer offerings.

The minors

Not looking to chill out to good music with the whole of the metro? Check out these gig places at night for good music and company.

Quezon City

• Big Sky Mind, 66B Doña Juana Ro-



LACOSTE
FOOTWEAR

• SHANGRI-LA PLAZA MALL, TEL. NO. 635-0744 • GLORIETTA 3, TEL. NO. 867-4077 • ROBINSONS PLACE MANILA, TEL. NO. 522-7778
• THE POWER PLANT MALL, TEL. NO. 898-0933 • THE PODIUM, TEL. NO. 633-8226 • THE GATEWAY MALL, TEL. NO. 912-5726 • SM CITY DAVAO, TEL. NO. (082) 297-2510

Why I keep coming back to Nazareth

By Guada Ramos
As told to Arlene Paredes
2bU! Correspondent

LOLA Inday once told me with a meek smile, *"Buntis ako."* When she said that, I knew right away she had won my heart.

Of course her claim couldn't be true as she was already 92 years old that time. But I just smiled and told her I'd be careful with her all the time.

Lola Inday is one of 28 *lolos* and *lolas* living in Nazareth Bahay Pag-ibig with whom I've been spending Saturdays as a volunteer since January this year.

During my orientation at Nazareth, Rowena Valdellon, a lay servant, told me volunteers should never have a favorite *"alaga"* in the House so that we could give equal care and attention to all 28 of the elderlies during our stay.

However, it was impossible not to see *Lola* Inday as perhaps the most endearing of them all. She is always cheerful, warm and very easy to deal with, even if osteoporosis is causing her much pain.

The soft, gentle and appreciative expression in her face whenever I feed or bathe her tells me that my efforts as a volunteer are being appreciated and there's a reason for me to keep coming back to Nazareth.

Nazareth Bahay Pag-ibig in San Pablo City is a home for elderlies who no longer have immediate families to take care of them. My first visit to the Nazareth happened several years ago when I was still a high school student at Canossa.

When I came back to do volunteer work, I did not feel strange at all. I was told that the youngest member of the house was a 45-year-old blind man, and the oldest wards were at least 92 years old (many of them could no longer recall their exact age), among them *Lola* Inday.

> Spending Saturdays with 'Lola' Inday and the rest of the elderlies at this hospice is like giving the best I can to God

A certain book inspired me to do volunteer work: "The Purpose-Driven Life." After reading it, I felt I could indeed give a little bit more of myself to those who needed me. I was scared I might not be good at taking care of the elderly, as it was something I had never done before.

But there was something about Nazareth that urged me to give it a try. Perhaps it was knowing that these people no longer have kin to take care of them, while I was surrounded with a big and loving family.

To whom much is given, much is also expected. So I decided to give my free dedicated service to the elderlies of Nazareth.

Whenever I'm about to leave the hospice, most of the oldies would ask me if I was coming back "next week," and I'd always say yes. I meant that, too.

I have learned so much from them, such that now I'm confident I can take care of my own parents when they, too, get too old to take care of themselves. Honestly, this was something I had feared—that I would turn out to be a clumsy, trying-hard nurse who would not be much of help when the time came.

But clearly, I had underestimated myself. Once there is a desire to do a job well, everything becomes easier whatever complications may come along. I have also become more thankful to God because my parents and grandparents have family members who will surely be at their side in their sunset years.

In one of my favorite "Friends" episodes, Joey argued with Phoebe that no one ever did anything good selflessly because we always got something nice—either a positive feeling or a return favor—from the good things we did.

He may be right. Because although I do not get any direct material reward from my volunteer work for Nazareth, I always go home rich in experience and filled with warm feelings from interacting with the elderlies of Nazareth.

It does feel good to help people in need. And when these people show you their appreciation in any way they can, you're lucky. But if they don't, you still don't lose anything.

Spending Saturdays with Lola Inday and the rest of the elderlies at Nazareth is like giving the best I can to God. "The Purpose-Driven Life" did say that giving of one's self can result in truly positive feelings. No wonder I keep coming back.

E-mail the author at lhen@postmark.net

Where else to volunteer

ABS-CBN Foundation
Creating a better future for our children to enable them to achieve their full potential, by providing them with a better quality of life, to inform, educate and mobilize various resources, to rescue and rehabilitate children in crisis.
Visit www.abs-cbnfoundation.com

Coral Cay Conservation
Coral Cay Conservation's award-winning program of reef and rainforest expeditions provides real adventure, real science and real results. Dive uncharted coral reefs, trek through virgin jungle, record rare species, map coral islands. The results help create World Heritage Sites, marine reserves, wildlife sanctuaries. Based in London, England, with expeditions to the Philippines.
Visit www.coralcay.org

Developmental Advocacy of Women Volunteerism Foundation, Inc.
Founded by a group of ordinary women who weren't content with providing doleouts to poor families in poor communities. Moved by the abject poverty around it, the group aims to lift the quality of life of thousands of Filipino families through a poverty intervention program. Based in Mandaluyong City.
Visit www.dawv.org

Hands On Manila
Formally established in August 2001, Hands On Manila (HOM) brings to the Philippines and the Asia-Pacific region an innovative and flexible model of volunteer service that allows for volunteering to be integrated into daily schedules of busy individuals.
Introduced and developed by City Cares, this model has been successful in 33 American cities and 13 cities in the United Kingdom. City Cares is an alliance of volunteer organizations founded in 1992 with the mission of encouraging and effectively channeling the volunteer impulse. Hands On Manila is the first City Cares affiliate in the Asia Pacific region.
Visit www.handsonmla.org

Haribon Foundation
Haribon Foundation first started out as a bird-watching group organized by Alicia Busser together with Dr. Robert S. Kennedy and Pedro C. Gonzales. The society gradually evolved into a full-fledged nature and wildlife conservation organization and in 1983 was transformed into a conservation foundation under the leadership of Dr. Celso R. Roque and Dr. Collin P. Rees. Based in Quezon City.
Visit www.haribon.org.ph

He Cares Foundation
A street-children caring center that sees itself as a channel of God's blessing to the poor, especially the street children. Based in Project 6, Quezon City.
Visit www.geocities.com/he_cares_foundation

International Institute of Rural Reconstruction
This foundation helps rural people improve their lives through participatory approaches to nation-building and social development. Based in Silang, Cavite.
Visit www.iirr.org

iVolunteer.ph
Seeks to foster the spirit of volunteerism further by harnessing the power and reach of the Internet. It provides web-based facilities for nongovernment and nonprofit organizations to post volunteer opportunities in a searchable database.
Visit www.ivolunteer.ph

Little Children of the World
Established in 1987 to address the plight of street children in underdeveloped nations. LCW is an international Christian agency dedicated to helping develop caring communities for the world's children at risk.
Visit www.littlechildren.org

Medecins Sans Frontieres
MSF provides care and support for street children in the capital of Manila. Through a day center and a mobile unit, MSF reaches over 250 children with services including medical consultations, supply of daily necessities, support for family reintegration and job placement, and, since April 2003, paralegal assistance. In Malabon, a slum on the outskirts of the capital, MSF runs a supplementary feeding center.
Visit www.msf.org

Mennonite Central Committee Philippines
MCC Philippines is increasingly placing volunteers in assignments related to the environment, indigenous peoples' concerns and issues affecting Muslim communities. MCC is also receiving more requests for trainings on conflict transformation and for expertise in developing peace-building programs.
Visit www.mcc.org/areaserv/asia/philippines/index.html

Virlanie Foundation
Virlanie Foundation is working with street children and young prostitutes in Manila, giving them shelter, food, education and love. Based in La Paz Village, Makati City, with offices in Wasquehal, France and Ypres, Belgium.
Visit www.vasia.com/virlanie

Volunteer's Place
A team dedicated to and believing in volunteerism as a catalyst for community empowerment and social change. The Volunteer's Place is organized and managed by Ayala Foundation, Inc. Based in Lahug, Cebu City.
Visit www.volunteersplace.net.ph

WWF Philippines
WWF seeks dedicated volunteers in conservation work, administration, finance, communications and assistance in various projects. Also requires help in field conservation operations such as research and monitoring for its various projects, or in conducting information education campaigns.
Visit www.wwf.org.ph/take/t_volunteer.asp

Source: http://www.filipinolinks.com/Society/Volunteering/

What to do after gradu...

By Cheryl Tiu
2bU! Correspondent

NOW THAT you have graduated, the next four months are yours to dispose—whether you want to take the time out to relax, learn a new language or plunge right into the market for jobs or internships. You take your pick, 2bU!'s here to help you decide.

> Use the summer months to prepare for the job-hunting days ahead

• **Make your resume.** The resume is the standard, skeletal frame of your character and accomplishments; it is necessary for job application. It should include the following: personal information, education, work experience/accomplishments, community involvement, special interests and personal references.

• **Prepare for job interviews.** Knowing what you really want, as well as the the nature of the companies you're applying to, will help you answer their questions more confidently, honestly and sincerely. Questions may range from "Why do you want to work in our company?" to "What do you think are your greatest strengths/weaknesses?" and "Why do you think we should hire you?" Apart from the questions, it is also important to review body language and behavior. Avoid nervousness (i.e. whistling, fidgeting, biting pens, running fingers through hair) and untrustworthiness (i.e. arms crossed in front of the chest, looking down when speaking). Instead, focus on building up confidence (i.e. leaning forward in chair) and warmth (i.e. smiling).

• **Attend job/career fairs.** The Amazing Career 2005 is expected to be one of the largest and most interactive career fairs, with at least 70 companies and academic institutions participating. It will be held on April 12 at the PICC Forum 3. Registration is free. Visit www.amazingcareer.org. Register online at www.amazingcareer.tk or fax your application form (downloadable from the website) to 8939996.

• **Go job-hunting.** Apart from giving your resumes to companies and institutions, you may also want to check out these job sites online: www.jobsonline.com.ph, www.jobstreet.com.ph, www.philrecruit.com, www. geekjobs.homestead.com, www.isd-phil.com, www.hotjobs.com

• **Read helpful books.** "Zen and the Art of Making a Living: A Practical Guide to Creative Career Design" by Laurence G. Bouldt (discovering your life work and purpose), "What Color is Your Parachute? A Practical Manual for Job-Hunters and Career-Changers" by Richard Bolles (job-hunting and career-shifting), and books by Donald Asher like "The Overnight Resume" (how to write outstanding resumes), "The Overnight Job Change Strategy" (cracking the hidden job market), and "The Foolproof Job-Search Workbook" (job search book guaranteed to merit job offers), among others.

Professional schools

Check out and start reviewing for professional schools and exams. Some details are as follows:

• **Graduate Schools (abroad).** Visit www.usnews.com for rankings and check out www.ets.org/toefl (TOEFL), www.gre.org (Graduate Record Examination) and www.gmac (Graduate Admission Council for the GMAT) fo exams.

• **Law School.** Most law schools have a trance exam to screen applicants; how some schools conduct interviews on wait-l applicants, mostly to test their command o glish, how they handle pressure and how think on their toes. Visit www.pinoylaw and http://law.upd.edu.ph.

• **Medical School.** The National Medica mission Test (NMAT) is administered by Center of Educational Measurement (C Call 8180403. Applications are also availab the various medical schools.

• **Engineering Board Exam.** There are engineering review schools along Espana near the University of Santo Tomas: Padill view Center (7357333) and Besavila Re Center.

Also check out www.prc.gov.ph (Professi Regulatory Commission) which has all the essary information to apply for examina and certificates.

• **Participate in summer and career c es, internships, and exchange prog abroad.** Not only will you advance your demic or work experience, but its thorou

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Hot, hot sounds

From page G1

driguez, New Manila

Gigs every Friday. Regulars are the itchyworms!, Twisted Halo and a whole lot of other independent bands.

• Conspiracy

59 Visayas Ave., Quezon City. Call 4532170

The likes of Cynthia Alexander, Noel Cabangon nd Cookie Chua. Enjoy good food with relaxing music.

• 70's Bistro

46 Anonas, Quezon City. Call 4343597.

Every night is a gig night. The likes of the Jerks, Cynthia Alexander and a bunch of other jazz and blues singers. The occasional rock act takes center stage.

Manila

• Mayric's, España (infront of UST)

A hole-in-the-wall gig place where every major band has played. Spot talents ready for the big time every once in a while.

Makati

• Peligro

Republic Glass Building, Aguirre cor. Salcedo Streets, Legaspi Village, Makati Tel. Call 8120952.

Rock outfit for upper-class music lovers. Regulars are Dirt and Kjwan.

• 6 Underground

Basement level, Glass Tower Building, C. Palanca St., Legaspi Village, Makati (beside Metropole)

The newest gig place with the best concept so far: no entrance fee, and the band gets no pay. It's all for the love of music. Players are anyone from amateur bands to the likes of the Mongols and Blue Jean Junkies.

• SaGuijo Café

7612 Guijo St., San Antonio Village, Makati

"I'M LOOKING forward to new albums by Bloc Party, System of a Down and Mars Volta, which are coming out this summer. And of course, Pedicab's album is due this summer, too!" says Jason Caballa of Pedicab and Twisted Halo.

AVRIL Lavigne

Its March calendar included Drip, Cambio, Happy Meals, Nancy Drool, and poetry readings. Log on to www.saguijo.com for updates.

Album releases

Remember, piracy is bad, bad, bad. No, really, it is.

March

• Jack Johnson, "In Between Dreams"—end of March
• Tweet, "It's me Again"—March 22
• The Bravery, "An Honest Mistake"—March 28
• New Order, "Waiting for the Siren's Call"—March 28
• Coco Lee, "Exposed"—end of March
• Nitty, "Player's Paradise"—end of March
• Bad Burn—end of March

April

• Garbage, "Bleed like me"—April 11
• Rob Thomas, "Something to be"—April 26
• John Legend, "Get Lifted"—first week of April
• Kanye West, "The New Workout Plan"—mid-April
• Will Smith, "Switch"—mid-April
• Mudyavne, "Lost and Found"—mid-April
• Santana—mid-April
• Natalie Imbruglia, "Counting Down the Days"—mid-April

May

• Jamiroquai—mid-May
• System of a Down, "Mesmerize"—mid-May

'70s Bistro serves up great music every night.

Make sweet music

Be a Mozart this summer

By Bianca Consunji
2bU! Correspondent

FORGET the strict old teacher who hovered over you as you took piano lessons as a kid. Music should be fun, not forced.

This summer, try an instrument you've always wanted to learn. If you think playing the drums is cool, or if it has always been your dream to make your voice soar over an audience, then by all means, go for it.

You can either join an established company, such as the Center for Pop Music and Repertory Philippines, or hire a private tutor, depending on what you want to happen. If you're in for the experience of meeting new people and performing with a group, then joining a troupe is the way to go.

But if you prefer some serious training, then opt for a private tutor. Some schools like the UP College of Music offer one-on-one extension programs, but some students also offer tutoring services (many of them are pretty good despite their age, and usually have lower rates than regular music classes.)

People to contact:

Private tutoring

• Saxophone
Joey—0927-5620650
Paul—0918-3458345

• Violin
Francis—0927-2670950

• Voice
Armin Comon—0920-2279330

• Drums
Gilbert Asuque—0927-2965119

Others:

• Repertory Philippines. Call 8870710 or fax 8880887. Interested parties should bring a recent 2x2 photo.

• Ryan Cayabyab The Music Studio. Call 8443330 or 8432874

• Center for Pop Music, Philippines. Call 8334639 or 8916124

• RJ Academy of Music. Call 8131316 or 813-6344

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ILLUSTRATIONS BY ANTHONY MISTADES

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tercultural exchange is guaranteed to be one of the best learning experiences. The Institute of Foreign Study allows you the following opportunities in various schools and institutions in countries like the US, UK, Australia, Italy, Japan, France, China and Singapore. Visit www.ifsphil.net. Call 8121187 or 8126229.

• **Learn a new language or heighten your foreign language to fluency.** Contact Alliance Française de Manille at 8957585 or visit www.alliance.ph; Goethe-Institut at 7224671; and Instituto Cervantes de Manila at 5261482 or www.manila.cervantes.es.

• **Take your well-deserved summer vacation.** Go on a trip with your family and friends, take up a new hobby, play sports, watch movies, print those digital photos, clean your room, spend time with your friends. For high school graduates, this is probably one of the last summer breaks you might ever have (most university majors require mandatory summer classes) and for college graduates, this is probably your last real long "break" before you start working. Let yourself bask in bliss for once—you deserve it. Congratulations, graduate!

E-mail the author at chertiu@gmail.com

Traveling in six . . .

From page G4

something like, *"Ha, tinatapon lang 'yan sa atin!"*, don't.

Try to blend in. Even if you don't look like the locals, act as if you are one. Learn the language, or at least those phrases that would be useful during your trip. Looking like an innocent tourist may get you the hottie you spotted in 7-11, but you'd also make a perfect target for unscrupulous people.

Be alert all the time, since criminals have creative ways of luring their victims. One tourist writes about how he became unconscious after drugs were rubbed onto his skin by people who "bumped" against him.

Just because a place looks like paradise doesn't mean it is. Anything can go wrong—political unrest, being trapped in a high-rise hotel fire, etc. The book "Worst-Case Scenario Survival Handbook: Travel" by Joshua Piven and David Borgenicht is a compilation of tips on dealing with "why me?!" situations, including surviving tsunamis. The book may come off as a paranoid's guide to travel, but you know what people say about an ounce of prevention blah blah.

What souvenirs?

• Never buy any of these: keychains, paperweights of any shape and size and T-shirts with a city/country/town's name on it. Too tacky.

• Give some thought to what memento you'd get for your family and friends. Hint: Get them something local like a hand-woven bag or an alligator jerky.

• Ask around to get an idea of the average price of an item.

• Haggle. Just don't do it in the mall.

• Check the purchased items and count your change before leaving the store or stall. Be wary of vendors deliberately shortchanging you or giving you a tattered version of what they showed you.

Home sweet home

Family and friends would want to know about your trip. But you should know you're going overboard when you show them the contents of five memory cards in a slide show. So keep it short and sweet, honey.

Q Queen of Hearts

Dear Queen of Hearts,

I'm an 18 year old student in love with a man who's 10 years older. My problem is: he's engaged to another girl. Because I'm not rich like her, there is no chance of him marrying me.

Even though I knew from the start that he will never agree to marry me, his rejection still broke my heart.

A month ago, I told him I am pregnant. He promised to give me financial support to raise the baby, but he said we really couldn't get married.

I got mad so I threatened to abort the baby thinking this would change his mind about marrying me. Even if he won't commit to a more permanent relationship with me, I'm sure he will be very angry about this. I know he won't allow me to do it, but I haven't changed my mind about getting an abortion.

I know this is wrong but I am so desperate and confused. What am I to do?

Shy Girl

Dear Shy Girl,

While I hate to say "you should've known better", given your obviously helpless state – I'm sorry, but I feel you really ought to have known better.

If you already knew right from the beginning that this man would never choose to marry you and yet you still got involved with him, you only have yourself to blame. I think I'm right to assume that no one pointed a gun to your head when you hooked up with him. You went into this relationship with the full knowledge of eventually walking out of it alone. However, now that you are pregnant, you're not really alone, are you?

I'm sure you were counting on him to fall so helplessly in love with you that he'd forsake everybody, ditch his fiancée and marry you instead. And when he didn't, you grasped at straws and threatened to abort his baby. Honey, having your unborn baby aborted will not change an already decided man's mind. Even if you say that your boyfriend is opposed to it, he seems to prefer a more 'practical' choice of a rich fiancée. Sad but true: for some men, social standing is more important than feelings, and also in your specific case, the prospect of having an illegitimate child.

Now if there's nothing you can do to convince him to marry you instead, here's something you can actually choose to do: keep your baby. Nowadays, women who are pregnant out of wedlock are not so scoffed upon as much as they were during the days of Nathaniel Hawthorne's 'The Scarlet Letter'. Then, channel your energy into finishing your studies (as you need a job to help raise your child even though the father promises to give you financial support). You're still young and you have your (and your baby's) future ahead of you. I'm quite sure that someday, you will meet a man who will not only love you and your child but also respect the choices you have made in your life that led you to him.

Queen of Hearts

For previous chapters & clues, log on to www.inquestor.com

To answer the question in Chapter 5, text INQ Q<question #> <answer> (Ex: INQ Q1 E) to 2320 for Globe/Touch Mobile and Sun Cellular subscribers or 309 for Smart/Addict Talk 'N Text subscribers. Maximum of 3 text answers per question. Send in your answers by March 30 to qualify for the preliminary draw on April 4.

TO JOIN, REGISTER NOW FOR FREE! Text INQ Reg <full name>*<complete address>*<age>*<gender> (Ex: INQ Reg Juan dela Cruz*1234 Ortigas Ave Pasig*34*M). Send to 2320 for Globe/Touch Mobile and Sun Cellular subscribers or 309 for Smart/Addict/Talk 'N Text subscribers.

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Traveling in six easy steps

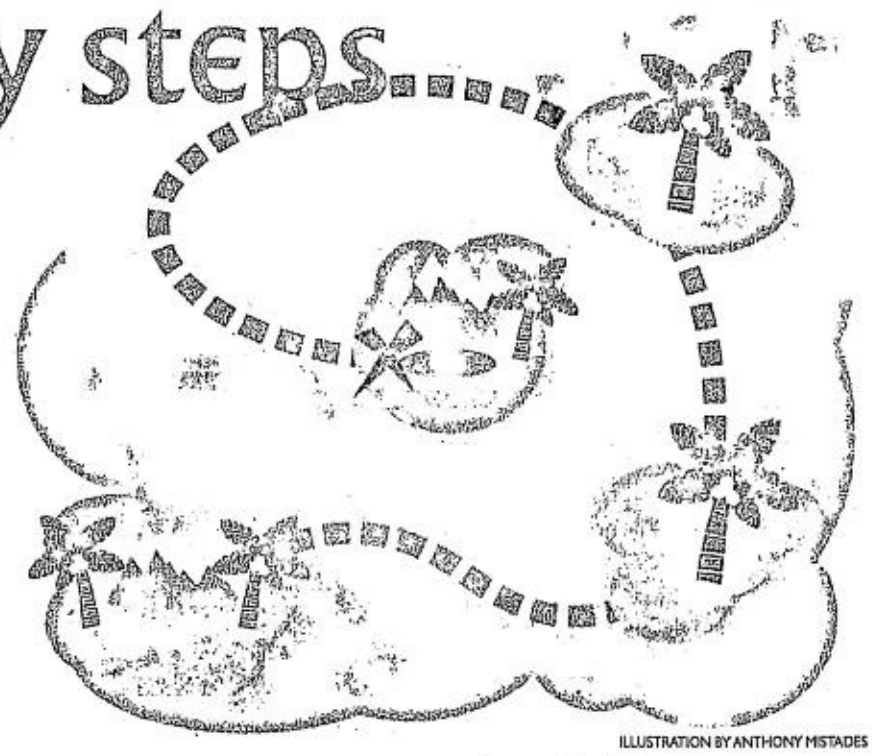


ILLUSTRATION BY ANTHONY MISTADES

By Kristine Ching
2bU! Correspondent

SOMETIMES packaged tours give you more headache than the ones you organize yourself. Planning a trip is not as hard as finding out if Britney's breasts are real. So read on and be informed.

This summer, scratch any destination that's on top of everyone's mind. Even in the traveling, there's such a thing as mainstream. Wouldn't you rather see what 10 million others in the metro haven't seen?

Where to go

Consider the following places:

Udaipur, India

Have you always fantasized about being Bond, James Bond? Book a night or two at the Taj Lake Palace where a vintage Buick or Cadillac will whisk you from the airport to a motorboat that will take you to the floating palace just like in the Bond movie, "Octopussy."

Sao Paulo, Brazil

Had enough of VJs and DJs talking gibberish? Head to D-edge Club which has light jockeys (LJ's) giving a whole new son et lumieré experience.

Isla Naburot

This island off Guimaras is still untainted by tourism. Hurry up before the brash party people take over. People are beginning to dub this place the next Boracay.

Cayangan Lake, Coron (Palawan)

Cayangan has been voted the country's cleanest lake. While you're in the area, check out the Makinit hot spring and nearby Calauit island.

Bago, Myanmar

Just when you thought chivalry is dead, you come upon the males of Bago who are said to be the most chivalrous in Myanmar.

Stay off the beaten track, travel light, meld with the crowd and never put down the host destination

Travel light

When packing your stuff, remember this: You're not a beauty queen. Hence you don't need five daytime moisturizers or three sets of clothes each day.

Just take a few sets of basic pieces and bring accessories. Accessories take less space than clothes. Also, learn to maximize spaces, like filling the shoes with socks, thus giving you more room to stuff *pasalubongs*. Visit www.onebag.com if you want to learn how to use every possible space in your luggage.

Ideally, for air travel, have everything you need in a hand-carried bag. The last thing you would want in a trip is for your luggage to end up in Rome while you're in Morocco. If you think that's hell, try following up on a lost Samsonite (remember "Meet the Fockers"?).

Having a hand-carried bag also saves you from the maddening baggage claim area. A trip should relax you or enrich your knowledge of different cultures, not stress you even more.

If you are going to be on a long flight, especially "overnight" flights, consider bringing your own in-flight kit. Your kit should include toiletry staples like toothpaste, toothbrush, shampoo, and soap to keep "airline grime" (facial oil + airplane smell = airline grime) off your face.

It is also advisable to include an extra set of clothes in your kit if you insist on checking your luggage in.

Prepping up

Read up on the destination. The Internet will be your new best friend. For information on Asian destinations, visit http://www.starasiatravel.com, for other countries, try www.lonelyplanet.com. If you want a comprehensive guide, then get one of those travel books.

Find out which restaurant serves the best local dish, where to find the cheapest souvenir, etc. Learn the country's customs and laws, and respect them. And if you can, go to a moneychanger with the best exchange rate.

When in Rome...

Keep in mind you're a visitor. Never put down anything about the place even if you think your country is better. If you feel saying

TRAVELING/ G2

Go for tofu

TOFU lovers, unite! There's a Tofu Festival waiting for you at Rustan's East Creative Asian Café.

Due to the success of last year's Tofu Festival, East Creative Asian brings back the feast of sumptuous tofu dishes, with new recipes covering everything from appetizing entrees to succulent desserts.

The festival, which runs until April 30, features creative Asian cuisine as executed by Chef Him Uy de Baron. The College of Saint Benilde-educated and Australian-trained culinary expert promises a joyful gastronomic experience with such fare as the light Gado Gado Salad with Tofu Satay, the blockbuster hit Tofu Burger and the distinctly unique Tofu Tiramisu.

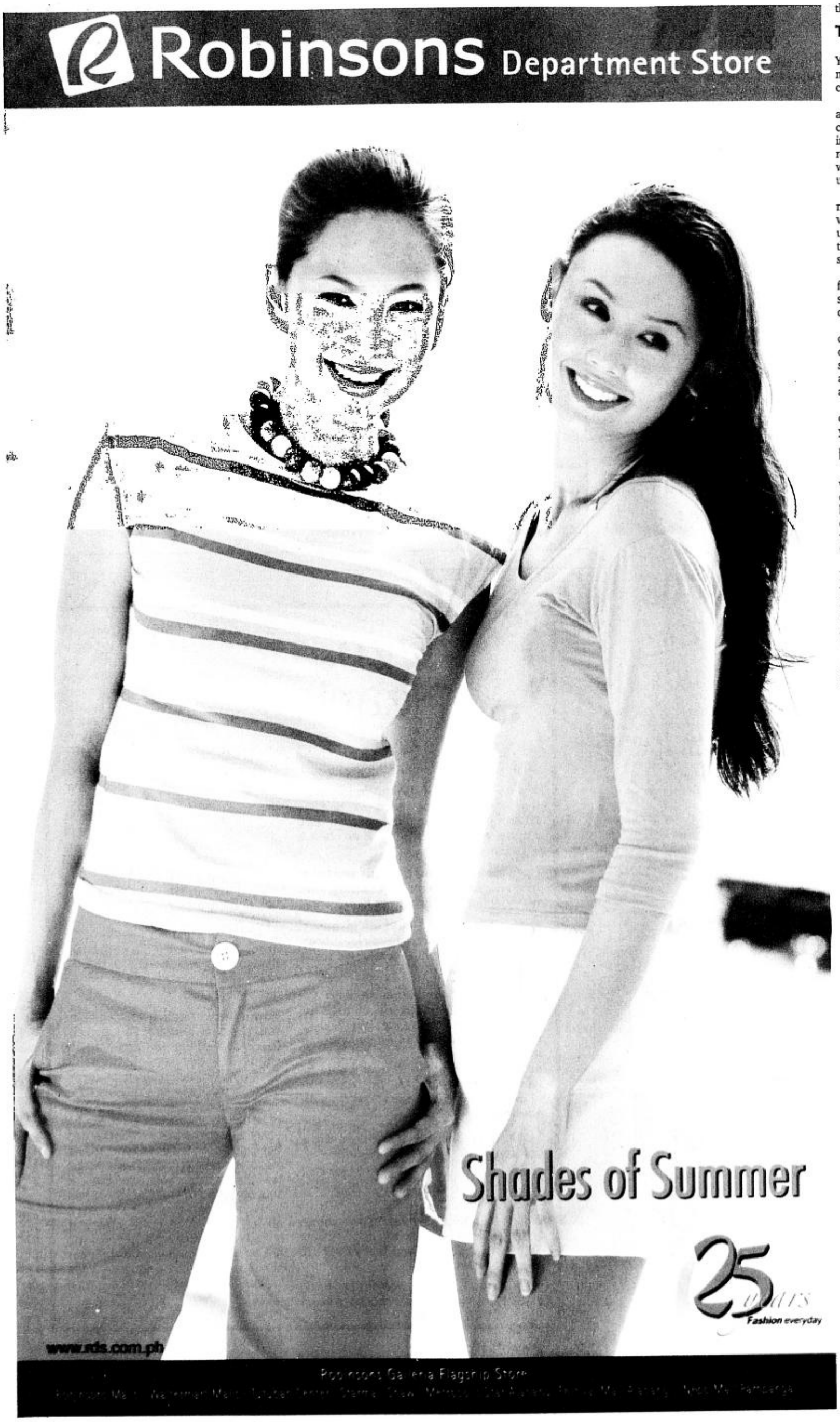
Chef Hin explains that creative Asian is different from fusion cuisine.

"Fusion is the merging of two different cuisine, whereas creative Asian makes use of traditional Asian preparations to recipes infused with certain twists."

With the purely Asian cooking preparation, other dishes like the Japanese-inspired Kisu wrapped in Yuba with Sweet Wasabi Sauce guarantee nothing but the best that Eastern cooking can offer.

Strategically located at the second floor of Rustan's Makati, near the ladies' wear section, East Creative Asian provides the perfect venue for shoppers on the run.

And with the "Kiddie Feast at East," shoppers may even take their little brothers or sisters dining. Little kids are treated to specially created meals that are both healthy and fun to eat. Moreover, they will be provided with place mats showing origami instructions, accompanied by colorful construction paper they can use to make paper sculptures.



A TEACHER'S LETTER

'Give something back'

Jo-Ed Tirol, who has been teaching Western Civilization at ADMU for 8 years now, writes to his graduating students

By Jo-Ed K. Tirol
Contributor

ILLUSTRATION BY ALBERT G. RODRIGUEZ

TO MY DEAR former students of graduating batch 2005:

I doubt I'll be able to congratulate every one of you personally on Friday or Saturday, whichever your big day happens to be. There's just so little time for individual greetings once the blank diplomas go flying and pandemonium breaks out once the alma mater song is sung for possibly the last time in your young lives. I'd like to think you respected me once upon a time as your history teacher, so I hope that what I have to say will mean something now that you're finally (hopefully) leaving the Loyola campus and going down the proverbial hill.

Basically, I have three things to say. Think of it as that final lecture you would've heard had you been my students one more time.

First, realize how big the world is out there.

Keep in mind that the Ateneo is actually a very small world, and definitely not the microcosm of Philippine society, as many students, alumni and faculty mistakenly believe.

There will be people out there smarter than you, more competent than you and, yes, more arrogant than you. Oh come on, admit it, no one graduates from the Ateneo without some minute sliver of excess pride of where you came from. Well, you will inevitably run into colleagues and encounter superiors (and, yes, even subordinates) with more right to have a larger ego than yours, so learn to shut up and put up.

Paradoxically, don't let anyone put you down. Never forget what you're worth, not just as an Atenean but, more important, as a person. Learn to take criticism, creative or otherwise. You were able to learn only so much from school (useful and otherwise), but that same school hopefully gave you the aptitude and the desire (there's a difference) to learn more. At the same time, however, know when you've had enough of other people's pettiness or insecurity. Quit if people treat you like shit. There's a better job waiting out there for you.

Very few graduating seniors know what they want, professionally and personally. The sooner you admit to yourself the range of possibilities, the sooner you will be more confident that somewhere out there is a place where you really belong. There are some aspects of your life you cannot change, such as at this point in time you are still financially dependent on your parents, or that you have to find a job quickly enough to supplement your family's income.

Nevertheless, there will always be pros and cons to every job you want to take, always consequences of the answers you provide yourself when you ask that most basic of questions: what do you want to do with yourself? Naturally, I'm not going to give you an answer; I'm very Socratic in that sense. You have to figure it out yourself; vicarious experience is nothing compared to the real thing.

I'm too old to condemn people whose lives are driven primarily by professional or financial ambition. I'd be a hypocrite to deny that some money is important, or that it's wrong to want to push a career. However, I'd also be doing you a great disfavor if I didn't point out that there is so much more to life than a six- or seven-figure paycheck, or a fancy title before or after your name. And these things, such as quality time with your family, or peace of mind from a clean conscience, are priceless. You can trust me on that score.

And trust me, too, that what you shouldn't be looking for is a job; what you really want is to find your vocation.

Second, understand what your place in the world is.

It'll only be a matter of time before you become disillusioned with the real world. If you graduate with even a smidgen of idealism, it's so ridiculously easy to lose it when faced with the complexities of growing up outside the protective shell of the university, of having to juggle work, family, leisure, and, oh, just staying sane.

Graduation means more exposure to the proverbial system—of corrupt and glacier-fast government bureaucracies, chasing inane deadlines set by invisible bosses, and barely keeping ahead of wonderful inflation. You will learn that the world isn't as black and white as theology or philosophy makes it out to be, but merely shades of gray.

Much as I am tempted to try, I cannot tell you how you should direct your life. The life you have is yours, and I wish that other people, well-meaning or otherwise, would remember that, too. But your life, which carries so much potential, cannot be called a life unless it has given life to others. We cannot be human without seeking a goal greater than ourselves, for that is how we realize our humanity even more.

GIVE/ H3

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SUMMER ACTIVITIES
@ the Knowledge & Learning Centre
In celebration of our 25th anniversary, British Council's Knowledge and Learning Centre (KLC) lines up a series of summer activities for children aged 7-16 years old.
Reading Shakespeare
An introduction to Shakespeare's Classics
14-16 years old
18-22 April 2005 (1:00 - 4:00 PM)
Facilitated by Ani Rosa Almario of Adarna Publishing House
Acting Shakespeare
A teens' theatre workshop
14-16 years old
25-29 April 2005 (1:00 - 4:00 PM)
Facilitated by Ana Valdes-Lim of Philippine Playhouse
Arts Mania
An arts and crafts workshop
8-13 years old
2-6 May 2005 (1:00 - 4:00 PM)
Facilitated by Ilustrador ng Kabataan
Reading Clinic
A workshop to enhance children's reading skills
7-9 years old
9-13 May 2005 (1:00 - 4:00 PM)
Facilitated by Bing Balayon of De La Salle University
Workshop fee: P3,500. First come, first served. Limited slots available. For more information please call 9141011 to 14 or visit www.britishcouncil.org.ph. The British Council is located at the 10th Floor, Taipan Place, Emerald Avenue, Ortigas Centre, Pasig City
BRITISH COUNCIL Philippines
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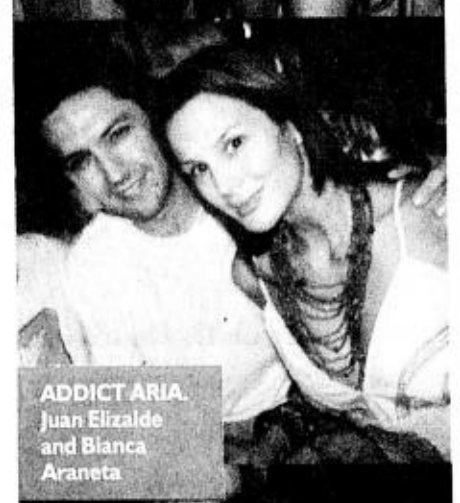
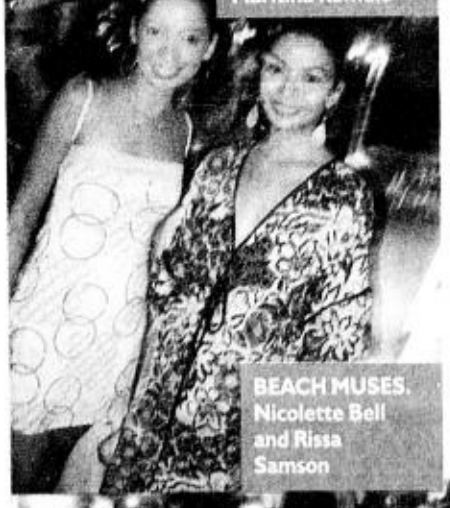
ALABANG A-LIST. Rafa Alunan, Nicole Hernandez and Paolo Villavicencio

BEACH CHILL. Carlos Fernandez with Kelly Misa


ADDICT ARIA. Juan Elizalde and Bianca Araneta

NOW YOU'RE IN. Rainier Sison with Maike Evers

SPARTY sensation. Freida Dario, Carribean British bloke Ivan with Maritina Romulo


BEACH MUSES. Nicolette Bell and Rissa Samson

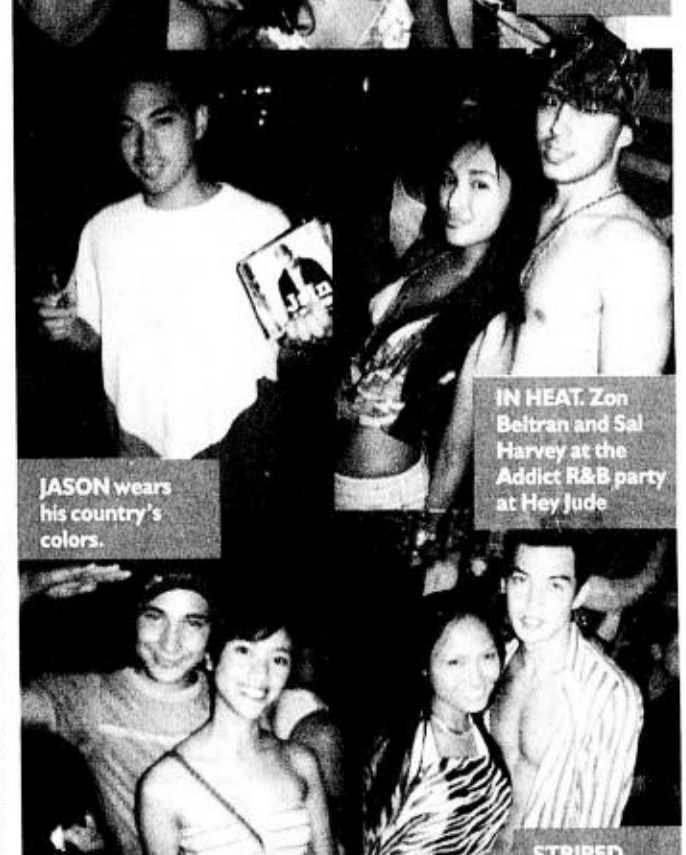
EASTER BUNNIES AND SLINKY BEAR. Ornusa Cadness, Borgy Manotoc, Yaparazzi a.k.a. Mark Caguioa with Dara Cadness

LIFE of the party Anna Angara

HOLY POUT. Borgy and Ornusa

ADDICT AMPLIFIED. Brent Javier and Borgy back-to-back

PRECIOUS MOMENTS with the Blue Eagles. (seated) Rich Alvarez, Rosanne Prieto and Wesley Gonzales; Larry Fonacier, Rainier Sison and Sonny Tadeo


IN HEAT. Zon Beltran and Sal Harvey at the Addict R&B party at Hey Jude

JASON wears his country's colors.

STRIPED ZEBRA. Avi Siwa and Jon Mullaly

NIGHT SHIFT. Christian Rauber and Ria Francisco

FOUR PLAY. Grant Hooks, party partners Cheska and Alexa with Brian Hills

NEW kid on the block JC de Vera with his hot date

HOT PICKS. Trina Inigo and chef Charles Olalia

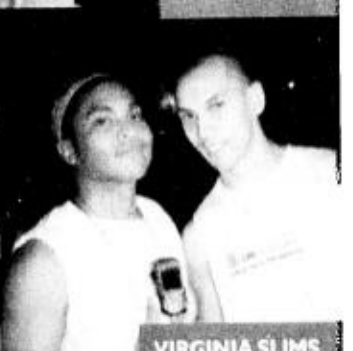
SUN AND SAND. Ana Martha Moreno and Zane Fansler

PACIFIC PLAZA. Giselle Sityar and David Nugent

JUICY TWO. Christine San Diego and Morten Bremelhoej just opened Juice bar—their Absinth in Boracay

TROPIC BEAUTY. Sol Glass and Jasmine Gunn

PAT N'PAT. Pat Pelayo and Patty Laurel


VIRGINIA SLIMS. Studio 23 VJ Beau Canlas and Steve Klimek

Mistaken identities and more

Tim Yap

A FEW years back, while sipping my mango shake on the beachfront of Boracay's Station 2, I noticed a lady staring at me. When she mustered enough courage to approach me, she asked, in a shy tone, "Sir, *kayo ho ba si* Hero Bautista?"

So I turned blond. I have nothing against the brother of **Herbert** and **Harlene**, but I just wanted to carve my own niche in Pinoy pop culture history.

Fast forward to now. Easter week in Boracay island again, ground zero for partyphiles from all over craving for their fill of fun. I was with my Addict Mobile crew, on our second year of togetherness sweeping the island with good, clean fun.

Borgy Manotoc with his clean-shaven head was doubly head-turning, armed with two stunningly sexy women, **Ornusa** (his va-va-voom girlfriend) and sister **Dara Cadness**—Manila's version of the Hilton sisters.

Bianca Araneta was busy manning the sunset sessions at Aria, with boyfriend **Juan Elizalde** on top of the situation. **Brent Javier** took charge of the R&B side of things, grooving to DJ **Steve Mills**' music at Hey Jude's and Club Paraw, while angel-faced **Nicole Hernandez** and **Maike Evers** raised temperatures just by their sheer presence, making the season truly "in heat."

Hardcourt heartthrob

Forever-cool **Rosanne Prieto** (who was with life-of-the-party **Anna Angara**) is starting a new show on ABS-CBN titled "Precious Moments."

She shared with me some precious moments about her family's and her own involvement in the field of basketball. Quite impressive. Listening to her gave me a newfound interest in the sport I had stopped playing after second grade.

It also helped that we were surrounded by gentle giants—our generation's answer to the basketball greats of yore. Behind the height of **Wesley Gonzales** is the might of a great athlete and achiever. After hanging out with him, I discovered a man of discipline and principle—someone really worth looking up to, not just for his size.

Rich Alvarez was so soft-spoken it felt as if I was talking to a Care Bear. **Larry Fonacier**, **Sonny Tadeo** and **Rainer Sison**, all shining stars of the Blue Eagle courts, were all super bonded like brothers. They did everything together! Think of them as a goody-goody male version of the "Mean Girls."

Most impressively, they all went to church together during Good Friday and Easter Sunday. I now look at these Blue Eagles in a whole new light.

Anyway, since I was hangin' out with the playahs, I felt so tall myself. It was like being in the clouds, or looking at everyone from the penthouse balcony.

What brought me to earth was when a guy approached me and asked if I was with the PBA. I thought he was referring to the skyscrapers I was with.

I said yes, to his astonishment—and he exclaimed, "Aaaah! *Ikaw si* Mark Caguioa!"

Now this was another situation. The last PBA game I watched was the championship game of Talk 'N' Text versus Ginebra—and I only remembered **Asi Taulava**, another blonde dude.

But my basketball friends told me this Caguioa guy is really a good player, and is another golden-haired boy. Well, I think, just like **Kris Aquino**, I should hang out more with our hardcourt players.

While we're on the topic of mistaken identities, some folks were apprehended by the Boracay police in a station far, far away from the party spots when an unsuspecting (and clueless) local was accused of burning potpourri on the beach—considered an environmental sin on this side of the earth.

I was shocked to hear of the news on Easter Sunday morning, because my friend's cousin and another basketball player were among those who were detained.

Later, I asked my friend's cousin about the incident and he said he had the time of his life—because his longtime crush was with him in the cell (along with the other accused), and they spent the whole night together. What a romantic setting, don't you think? They were only released in the morning after their resort called the authorities and they were able to prove their innocence. Just goes to show that it's not where you are, but who you're with and, most importantly, how you choose to feel about your situation, that matters.

The crowd in Boracay wasn't as crazy as in the past years. It was a mix of the same old (or ageless) party faces, peppered with excited newbies and *artistas* gone awry. Everyone brought his or her own camera to record the action. Others even brought videocams—so get ready for more "scandals."

Bora night action

Crowds went gaga to get a glimpse of **Maui Taylor**, **Jen Rosendahl** and **Gwen Garci** while in mid-bite, while the rest of nocturnal Boracay danced the night away at the Addict parties in Aria, Hey Jude! and Club Paraw.

Studio 23 held fort at Cocomangas, bringing in a plethora of DJs from all over the world. There was an abs fest going on in the beach, with every hunk and babe displaying as much flesh as possible.

Slinky was still the hands-down winner in the all-week party fest. "TC is really guiding us from heaven," Big Fish's **Domini Primero** exclaimed under the "No to Drugs" banner.

My camera caught the action mostly at night. My lens gets active from sunset up.

Here was the Holy Week action in holy Bora, where kids played and ballers prayed, where slinky meant more than just bikinis and where the heat was just another note in the party beat.

Now excuse me while I savor my Malibu pineapple.

(Photos of bikini-clad Bora by day coming this Super! Saturday.)

Debaters get their day

By Javier Mata
2bU! Correspondent
Photos by Tats Munetomo

THE WINNERS and awardees pose with the spoils of war. TATS MUNETOMO

CAN'T we all just get along?

Actually last Feb. 25-March 1, the answer was a resounding and hearty NO! But before you assume the worst, let me bring in some clarity: For on those days were reserved for disagreement and debating. And what better place to be for competitive disagreement than the 4th INQUIRER Intercollegiate Debate Championships (IIDC)?

Sponsored primarily by INQUIRER, the IIDC is one of the largest debate tournaments, spanning five days, with participants from most of the major colleges and universities all over the country flocking to UP Diliman for the momentous event.

In case you're wondering why all the hoopla, you've got to understand that competitive debating is actually a big deal in the Philippines. Filipinos are widely regarded as top debaters in Asia and in the international competitive debating community.

The IIDC is one of the avenues for the brightest college debaters to hone their skills and test their mettle on a national scale.

The day started with most of the contingents exchanging pleasantries like long-lost friends (indeed many had known each other from previous tournaments).

Since I don't have space to explain the intricacies of competitive debating, I'll risk oversimplifying: You are given a topic or motion, assigned either the affirmative or the negative side, then you construct and defend your case. The winner is usually the more convincing debater.

And for three days and five rounds, debate was exactly what we did. We argued, cheered and jeered in an attempt to show our brilliance and knowledge in fields ranging from politics and economics, in the nuances of principles like rights, liberties and individual accountability, and recent events like the fiscal crisis, Iraq and even sports.

All the training my teammates and I underwent (indeed, everyone trained) was finally put to the test among the best... and in the end, when the heated words slowly faded and minds were finally exhausted, the scores were tallied.

The top 16 teams were chosen. But before the announcement of which teams would advance, a break was in order.

Break

As a treat to all participants, the IIDC offered a "break night party" at the PHI resto bar in Ortigas. Everyone exchanged tournament experiences— good (thought-stimulating arguments), bad (spotty logic) or funny (humorous wit and one-liners). The participants were like old friends with the help of good food, free-flowing drinks and the upbeat tunes of Session Road.

And at the night's climax, the teams advancing to the finals were announced... and my team made it! We were in 10th place! The night couldn't have gotten any better.

As fate would have it, we faced some of our dear friends in the Octofinals, and got beaten. While I felt sad for not being able to advance to the quarterfinals, I was so happy for my friends and hoped them the best of luck. Still, since I was no longer in the heat of the competition, I could now relax and watch the rest of the grueling matches as well as the complementary public speaking competition. And as luck would have it another one of my friends won that one! Congratulations, Kevin from La Salle!

The quarterfinals became the semifinals, and when the dust settled, two teams were left—Ateneo A and UP-Diliman A. The final battle was heated, brilliant and even a bit funny, and when the stage's energy was all but spent and dagger-eyes morphed into pleasant smiles, there was nothing left to do but wait for the decision of the adjudicators.

The winner was UP Diliman! Congratulations!

Who says being smart is boring and bland? The IIDC has proven that smart guys and gals can kick it... all the way till next year. No debate about it.

'Give something back'

From page H1

Each of you has been given so much by so many people, it's about time you learned to give back. You are in the world for others. To give without counting the cost, to fight without heeding the wounds, to toil and not to seek for rest, to labor and not to ask for reward.

Third and lastly, in moments of confusion, despair or exhaustion, remember your Ateneo roots.

You are graduating from a university that, despite its shortcomings, represents something profound—aking men and women for others, to be Lux in Domino, Light in the Lord. The dream of the Ateneo de Manila University is fundamentally good and you can take it wherever you go, in whatever country or field you choose to work.

I'm sure perceptive students can tell what a sappy person I am under all the layers of cynicism and sarcasm. There is a huge difference between piety, religiosity and spirituality, and I hope you know which of the three is the best to have. Just as God, or whatever omnipotent, omniscient Other you happen to acknowledge, brought me back to Loyola to teach, He/She will help you on your way. It's not a matter of asking Him/Her to guide you, but more of listening. A lot of times, He/She has been there all along, except you've been too busy talking (or whining) to hear His/Her voice. *Vaya con Dios*.

"The original sin is to limit the Is. Don't."(From Richard Bach's Illusions)

I wish you all the best, and if you think I have made a difference in your life, you have no idea how much you have made in mine. Draw on the strength you have always had but maybe never even knew you had.

Always remember, at the same time, you are never alone, even if you might want to be.

Once more, congratulations!

Ad Majorem Dei Gloriam.

2BU! PROMO

Win 'American Idol' goodies!

BYE BYE, Mikalah, bye bye.

Mikalah Gordon's rendition of "Love Will Lead You Back" did not cement her place among the finalists. This week, we have 10 finalists left to root for.

To add even more fun to this season's American Idols, 2bU! and Star World have been giving away exclusive "American Idol" premium items.

E-mail your answers to the following questions to americanidol_on_starworld@

yahoo.com. The first five people who will send correct answers will win.

Week of March 28

1. What was the theme of the show last week?
2. This famous celebrity made a special audience appearance at last week's "American Idol" episode. Who was he?
3. What is the title of Simon Cowell's book published in 2003?
4. Who among the contestants think of Stevie Wonder as his American Idol?
5. Which former AI contestant served as a Grammy correspondent for Entertainment Tonight and landed a role in the Broadway hit Rent?

Catch "American Idol" on Star World with direct off satellite telecasts on Wednesday and Thursday at 4 p.m. and primetime replays at 8 p.m.

Winners for week of March 21:

1. Marifi Garcia
2. Zinia Alpay
3. Frederick Hawson
4. Karina Solomon
5. Madge Macatulad

Winners can claim their prizes at Agatep Associates Inc., 16/F Robinsons Equitable Tower, ADB Ave. cor. Poveda St., Ortigas Center, Pasig City. Look for Ceejay or Ampy.

8 KEYS TO YOUR DIFFERENT INTERESTS

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INQUIRER Badminton EXPO 2005

May 20 - 22, 2005 Megatrade Hall 2

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Exhibitor A (For Court Owners/Facility Owners) P15,000
Display/Promotional activities only, No selling allowed
P12,500 - EARLY BIRD PROMO

- 2m x 3m booth space with a table, two chairs, lights and outlet
- One (1) 8cms x 7cms box ad space in the **Inquirer Badminton** Classifieds (May issue)
- Inclusion of company name in the list of exhibitors to be released in the in the pre-event announcements **Inquirer broadsheet** and **Inquirer Badminton** April issue that will be distributed to partner-courts and during the expo
- Inclusion of company name in event announcement print ads to be released in the **Inquirer broadsheet** and **Inquirer Badminton** May issue that will be distributed to partner-courts and during the expo
- Inclusion of company name in the welcome panel to be displayed at the registration area
- Privilege to publish two (2) press releases of the court/facility in the **Inquirer Badminton** within June-December 2005

Exhibitor B (For Equipment and Apparel Distributors and Suppliers) P45,000
Selling of badminton equipment and apparel allowed, No selling of food and drinks
P42,500 - EARLY BIRD PROMO

- 2m x 3m booth space with a table, two chairs, lights and outlet
- One (1) 4cols x 15cms, full-color (quarter page) ad space in the May issue of **Inquirer Badminton FREE**
- Inclusion of company name in the list of exhibitors to be released in the in the pre-event announcements **Inquirer broadsheet** and **Inquirer Badminton** April issue that will be distributed to partner-courts and during the expo
- Inclusion of company name in event announcement print ads to be released in the **Inquirer broadsheet** and **Inquirer Badminton** May issue that will be distributed to partner-courts and during the expo
- Inclusion of company name in the welcome panel to be displayed at the registration area
- Privilege to publish three (3) press releases of the court/facility in the **Inquirer Badminton** within June-December 2005

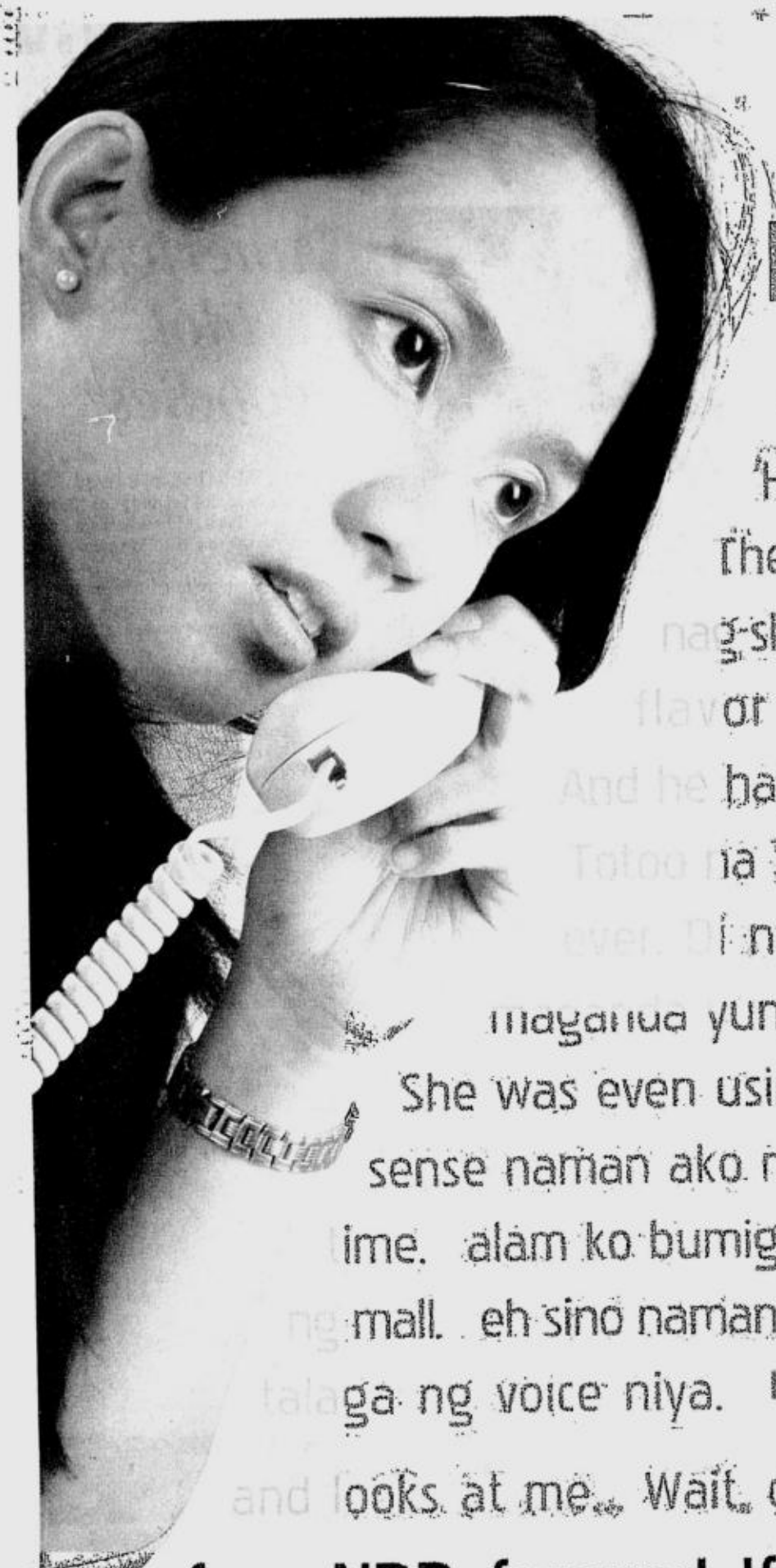
BOOTH RESERVATION FORM

YES, I am interested to participate as an exhibitor.

☐ Exhibitor A Package ☐ Exhibitor B Package

Company Name _____ Product _____
Contact Person _____ Position _____
Tels Nos _____ Telefax _____
Address _____
Email _____ Website _____

Please fax Booth Registration Form to 8900270 or 8972535 on or before March 28, 2005.
For inquiries, please call Ching Dela Cruz at 8978808 local 259.



Globelines

NDD *ka na magbabayad!*

Huling-huli ko talaga siya Portia. They were coming out of a movie. mukhang g-share pa sila ng popcorn kasi parehong cheese or yung mantsa sa mga shirts nila. had the nerve to deny it! Ayoko na talaga... ia talaga to believe me! I won't forgive him i na niya ko kaya bolahin! Eh hindi naman magaanda yung girl! Tsaka di ko gusto yung shoes niya. She was even using the wrong bag for it. Mas may fashion sense naman ako no! I swear Portia, he's hurt me for the last ime. alam ko bumigay ako nung kinantahan niya ako sa gitna mall. eh sino naman makakatiis nun right? Kainis kasi ang ganda ga ng voice niya. I remember ' ge so kilig when he sings ooks at me... Wait, don't go yet. don't worry! Sa Globelines **free NDD forever! If you apply between March 21 to April 19, 2005.** Ang dami ko na ngang natawagan eh. **Basta Globelines Postpaid to any Globelines phone anywhere in the country!** Which means **no per minute, no per call, no added charge! Libre talaga!** Teka, existing Globelines subscriber ka ba? **Current subscribers can just call to activate.** Ah talaga? Ikaw **hindi pa subscriber? Apply na!** Hay ok talaga no? **Iba talaga ang libre!** Teka muna balik tayo sa problema ko. Never mind him na di ba?... I hate him talaga! Mas masarap ba siya magluto ng brownies kaysa sa akin? I don't think so! Nag-ballet ba siya since kinder? I don't think so! Naging muse ba siya ng varsity for three straight years? I don't think so! Pag nakita ko talaga yung babaeng yun sasabunutan ko siya! Hmph! Hindi na talaga makakalusot ang lalakeng yan sa akin! I don't care how cute he is. those eyes.. those arms. his hair Portia nami-miss ko yata siya.

New and existing subscribers who apply during the promo period will enjoy toll-free NDD calls from Globelines postpaid to any Globelines phone for the duration of their subscription.
Call our customer care hotline at (02) 919 8888 in Luzon or (032) 410 8888 in Visayas and Mindanao.
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Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 1597, Series of 2005.

Boracay now a haven for 'corporate' beach bums

Text and photos by Raquel P. Gomez

AH, LIFE's a beach to anyone who has equated summer and the days off from work to fun and frolickin' in the sands and sea under the glorious sun. To be more precise, a beach scenario with you in a hammock drinking piñacolada with no thought of work at all—now that's a real vacation.

BORACAY/ I2

Ah, Sumah!

The sun shines brightest here and now

Summer's ultimate adventure is here

By Joel V. Nigos

ARE your surfboards ready? Have you checked your snorkeling gear you've been keeping since last summer? Do you want to ride those banana boats and water rafts? Or do you just simply want to frolic in our country's best white sand beaches?

Looking for an adventure this summer? You may opt to join this summer's Island Caravan.

Just like the standard tour packages, the Island Caravan has a well-defined itinerary consisting of varied activities and events—whether cultural, heritage, sports and eco-adventure, spa and wellness, culinary and pilgrimage—to satisfy every traveler, young and old. But unlike the ordinary tour package, the Island Caravan will take you to not one or two but three or more of our country's best tourist destinations.

The Island Caravan also has a well-organized traffic management and security control especially prepared for group travel allowing tourists to learn and experience the Philippines at its best. The program also opens opportunities to reach not-so-developed tourist destinations that have great tourism value further enhancing the promotion of other established tourist destinations.

The Island Caravan will have four major runs this summer. Each run is distinct from each other as it covers various destinations all over the Philippines. The caravan will go up as far north as Pagudpud in Ilocos Norte and down south to Siargao Island in Mindanao.

The first run, dubbed "Island Quest: The Nautical Highway Adventure" slated from April 1 to 5, features the best beaches of Puerto Galera and Boracay with island activities such as snorkeling, island hopping, beach massage and various water sports activities heaped into the itinerary. Calapan provides the cultural part of the event with shows and a tour of the cathedral and its museum.

The second summer run titled "Tropical Jewels: The Visayan Charm" slated from April 8 to 12 features a tour of the Visayas region and its idyllic heritage sites covering Cebu, Bohol, Dumaguete and Siquijor.

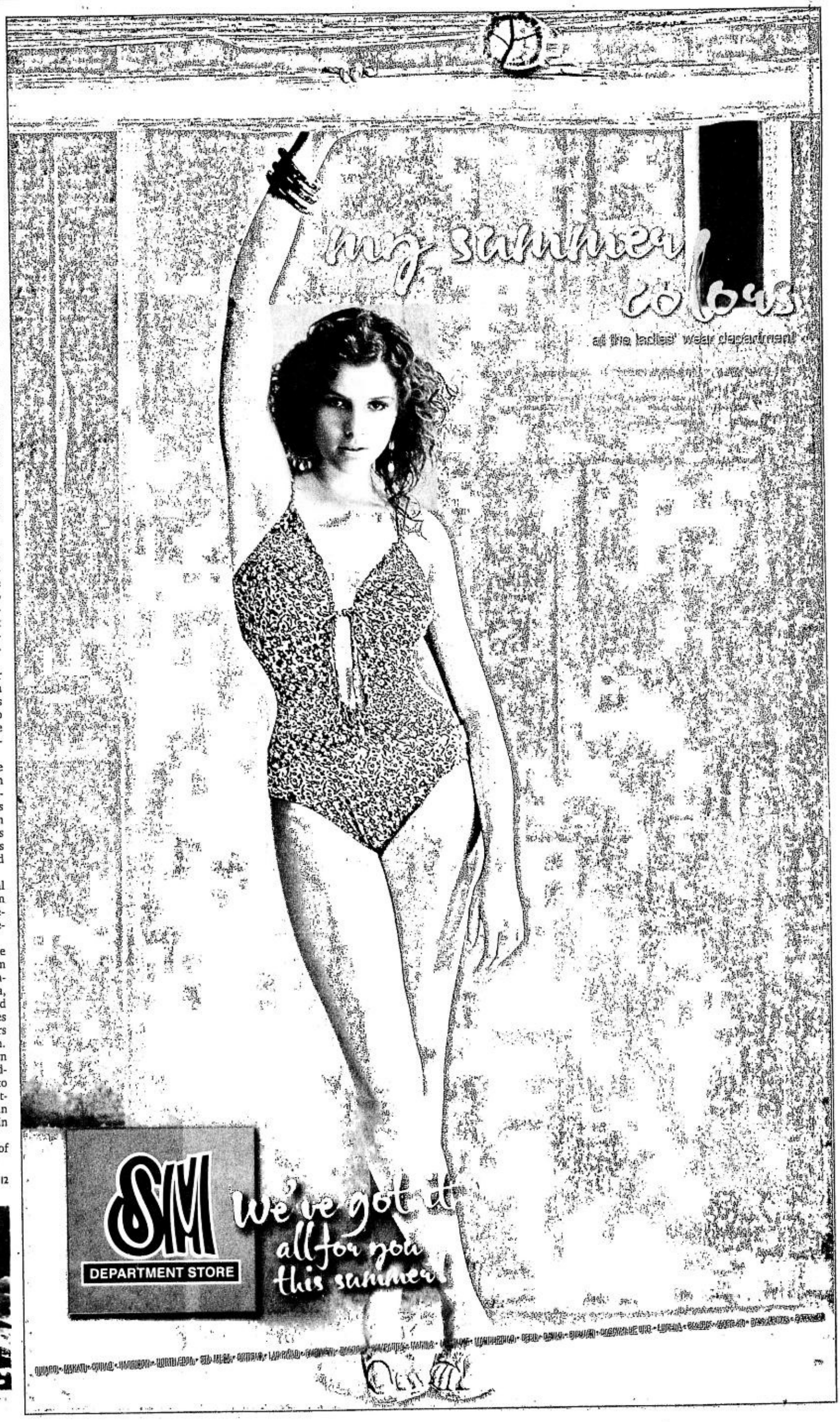
The "North Philippines Expedition: The Great Outdoor Escapade" scheduled from April 29 to May 3 is the third summer run featuring North Luzon covering Nueva Vizcaya, Banaue, Peñablanca, Pagudpud, Laoag and Vigan. This caravan offers outdoor activities such as spelunking and kayaking with tours of cultural heritage sites in the Ilocos Region.

The last summer run, titled the "Southern Feat: The Trailblazing Challenge" is scheduled from May 20 to 24. The caravan is set to challenge participants' limits in extreme outdoor activities like water rafting in Cagayan de Oro, river cruising in Kalinawan River in Agusan del Norte and surfing in Siargao.

And if you think you haven't had enough of

SUMMER/ I2

WATER rafting at Cagayan de Oro



RAINBOW CITY

Pinamalayan gets ready for tourists

Trips going to Marinduque or Caticlan must have passed through this town. And if they happen to travel in the daytime, chances are the giant red pot and half-rainbow could have attracted their interest.

Pinamalayan in Oriental Mindoro is no longer just a stopover as it gets ready for the influx of visitors once structures essential for tourist destinations are put in place.

The town is a famous gateway for other more popular provinces using the nautical highway: going north will lead you to Calapan while moving down south will bring you to Caticlan.

At a glance, Pinamalayan seems like any other remote town. The stillness of rural life awes first-time guests. The sight of rice paddies while traversing the road seems like something taken out of the movies. Little do people know that it has a lot to offer when it comes to natural sites. If its location is any indication, the town offers a lot of beaches for enjoyment.

Realizing the potential of ecotourism, the municipality led by Mayor Aristeo Baldos Sr is gearing for its launch as an alternative tourist destination. The soft inaugural flight by Corporate Air with its new Cessna Grand Caravan affirms the local government's intention to share its natural wonders to would-be tourists.

A drive from the newly reopened Pinamalayan Airport will reveal the rustic impression of the town.

Pinamalayan's famous landmark derives a lot of pride from the local folk. A giant pot and a half rainbow or simply called the Rainbow Junction signal the entry to their version of the urban district. Along the way, major companies have set up their business centers there. The construction of new buildings for the imminent flourishing of commerce are underway.

Being a major agricultural area, it aims to become the country's food basket. Its major produce includes coconut, copra, banana, a variety of fruits and vegetables. It being situated along the coastline yields a diversity of marine life.

Beaches and falls

Take a plunge into a number of beaches in the town. The Mahabang Buhangin is situated along the natural coastline stretching about 3 km. Ideal for snorkeling, you can also go fishing as the area is also rich in marine life and is a major source of commercial and ornamental fish.

The Bulaklak Garden Resort will give you the feel of a Boracay-like beachfront with its almost-white sand. It has several air-conditioned native-built cottages. The resort is only 6 km from the poblacion north of Barangay Pili and will assure you of a quiet weekend getaway.

The Magdalena Beach Resort is the best site to unwind for a day with cottages scattered along the beachfront. It is complemented by the Bongol Hills off the coast.

Cawa-cawa is composed of three medium-high falls each adjacent to one another and perfect for trekkers and for a brief dip. The Marayos Falls will lure families for a simple picnic just 8 km from the nautical highway.

MINDORO'S coastline gives you a perfect view of the sea.

CORPORATE Air's Cessna Grand Caravan on its soft inaugural flight to Pinamalayan Airport.

Aside from these inviting summer destinations, Pinamalayan also has mountains, green farms, and forests for adventure-seeking trekkers.

Festivals

In time for the town's founding anniversary, the local government holds the Bahaghari Festival during the month of April. This year, it has scheduled a long celebration capped off with a Mardi Gras. Expect colors, parties, sports and entertainment competitions, a fluvial parade, and the much-anticipated Mangyan mass wedding. Bahaghari Festival 2005 has its theme "Balik-Pinamalayan '05—Isang Pagpupugay: Kasaysayan, Karangalan, Kaunlaran." The festival was first held in 2000 in lieu of the traditional Pinamalayan Fiestang Bayan.

Prior to the grand celebration, the town held the Bahaghari Centurion Festival and the Senakulo during the Holy Week. Much like Marinduque's Moriones, the Centurion Festival also features lavish costumes of the Roman centurions and colorful masks.

Pinamalayan's name may be derived from legends. With the root word "pinamalay" translated as "made known," it is certainly making its town known for its richness in natural wonders and cultural heritage.

Prime tourist destinations and beaches may have been overflowing with guests this time of the year. There is an alternative destination that will suffice your craving for a calm getaway just around the coastline of Oriental Mindoro.

Boracay now a haven for 'corporate' beach bums

From page I1

A ROOM with a view: Presidential suites offer a wonderful view of Boracay's pristine beach.

This used to be the very idea of vacation bolstered in our minds by beach postcards or travel brochures, but this is not the case anymore—as attested by the growing number of people who now go to Boracay to do both serious work and pleasure on the side.

"This has been the trend in Boracay, companies bring their employees here for conferences and seminars," said Bang Rodriguez, operations manager of Boracay Regency Beach Resort. "Some seminar participants even bring their families along to enjoy the beach while they sit and listen to talks or do team building activities."

Yes, the new wave of Boracay's clientele are corporate denizens sans the tie and the suit, donning casual beach wear and contemplating about increasing the company's market share in a beach scenario.

To accommodate the big groups of people from the corporate world, Boracay Regency recently opened a new wing bringing the hotel's occupancy capacity to 195 rooms. Spanning an area of more than 13,000 square meters, Boracay Regency is the biggest hotel with the widest beachfront in this small island. It has two large swimming pools, two coffee shops, two garden bars, an underground disco, zen gardens, and seven conference rooms, including one convention hall that can accommodate 600 people.

"Most hotels in Boracay can only offer an average of 60 rooms," according to Bang. She said the demand for large groups who want to hold their activity in Boracay has grown to a level that prompted the hotel to expand. It was sitting only on a 3,600-sqm beachfront property when it opened in 1998. Then it expanded horizontally and parallel to the beach with another 3,600-sqm lot and then expanded to another 4,600 sqm, which now holds the spanking pool and regal presidential suites and rooms with a view of the cool beach.

Convention center opened

"In September last year we opened the big convention center and that really made the hotel capable of accommodating and servicing very large groups, not only corporate guests but also guests for weddings," said Bang.

Boracay Regency has been the venue for a number of corporate conferences that had more than 200 attendees, such as a convention held by Chamber of Real Estate Builders Association, Roche Philippines, Pepsi, and Globe Philippines.

Recently, the hotel was busy facilitating a seminar for Oticon, a company based in Denmark. About 40 delegates from different countries came over and booked 40 rooms.

"Low turnout of seminar attendees has always been a problem of companies, but if you put Boracay into the seminar package, it's going to be a hundred percent attendance," said Bang who has seen lots of seminars with perfect attendance sheets.

The airport in Caticlan, the main portal to Boracay, is by far the busiest airport at the moment. Asian Spirit has about 16 flights a day to Caticlan. South East Asian Airlines topped that with 18 flights a day, or a SeaAir plane landing in Caticlan every half hour.

Patrick Tan, vice president of SEA Airlines, said it has about 900 seats available for the Manila-to-Boracay flight every day. Tan boasts of new airplanes that fly to Boracay, the 32-seat Dornier 328s that are fast and convenient, with passengers assured of landing safely to Caticlan in 35 minutes. Another 10-minute ferry ride would bring the passenger to Boracay, and there'd still be enough time for him or her to freshen up in the hotel and attend the 9 a.m. conference.

Boracay Regency's chair and president Henry Chusuey said the hotel was built to increase job opportunity to the locals in Boracay, as well as to help the government earn more dollars. "We will do our best to continuously live to our clients' expectations of being the only triple A resort in the middle of Boracay's long beach."

There's no denying the boom in Boracay, and it's not going to abate, said Henry Sy, a director of the resort. In 2004, almost half a million people trooped to Boracay and poured in P7.88 billion to the island's economy.

"Companies think that their people would be happier if they go to a beach resort such as Boracay rather than stay in Manila for their meetings. It's for the purpose of making employees unwind or relax. I think this will continue," said Sy with a smile.

THE OPENING of Boracay Regency's new wing brought the hotel's capacity to 195 rooms.

Summer's ultimate adventure is here

From page I1

these adventures during summer, you may also try these various thematic runs slated for the whole year which will cover the Philippine archipelago.

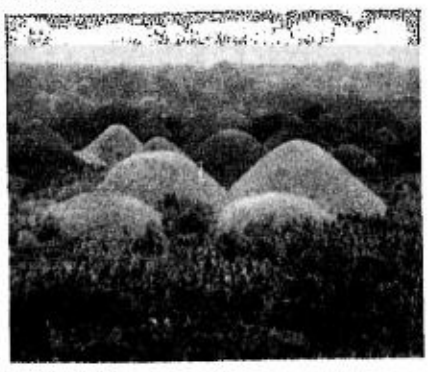
- Heroes' Journey (Manila, Bulacan, Clark, Subic and Bataan), June 11 to 13
- Palawan Escape (Puerto Princesa) June 17 to 19
- Bohol Heritage Tour (Bohol) July 15 to 17
- North Luzon Rediscovery (Manila, Baguio, Manaoag, Hundred Islands, Alaminos, Bolinao) Aug. 19 to 21
- Marian Pilgrimage (Manila, Antipolo, Laguna, Quezon, Naga) Sept. 8 to 11
- Camiguin Trail (Camiguin) Oct. 13 to 16
- Bicol Express (Manila, Legazpi, Donsol, Sorsogon) Nov. 28
- Batanes Scenic Border (Batanes Island) Dec. 9 to 11

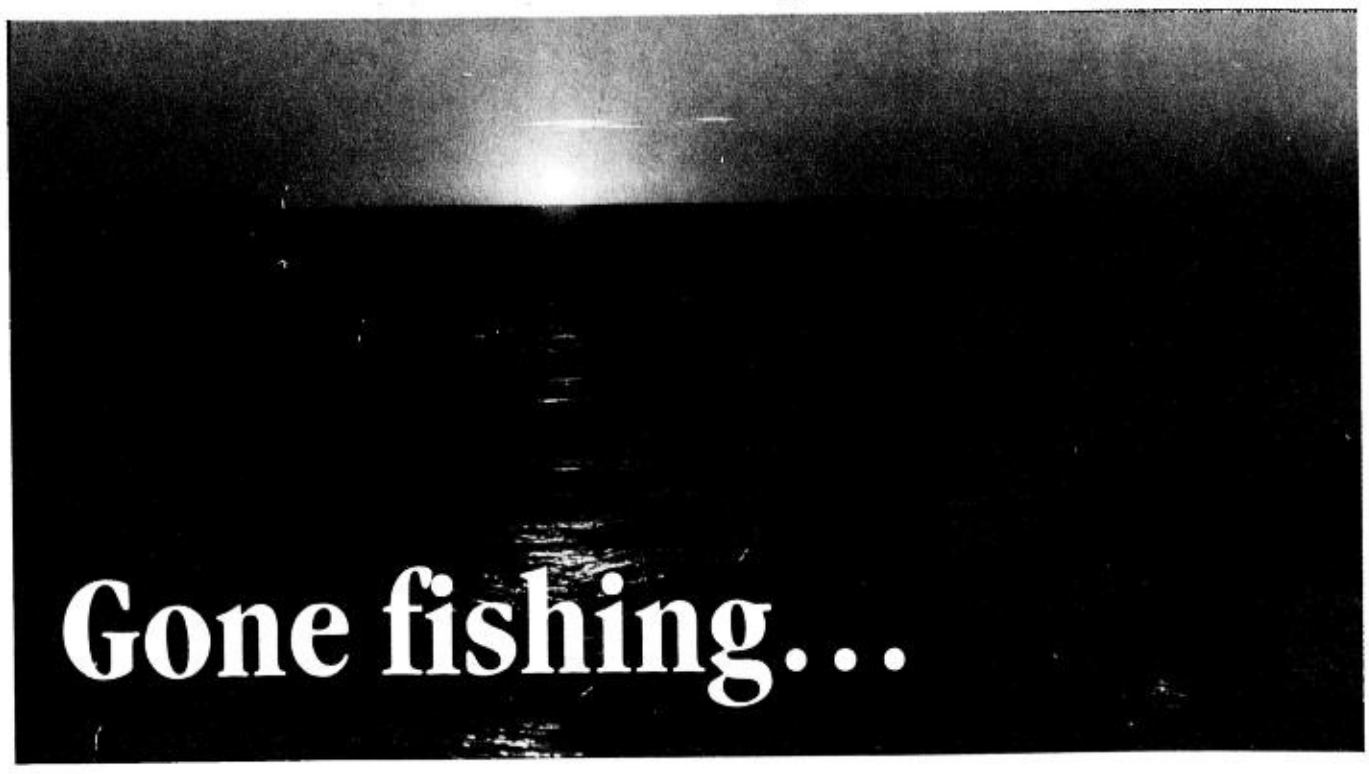
The Island Caravan is sponsored by the Department of Tourism and Globe together with the initiatives of the Island Caravan Consortium composed of Annset Holidays, Baron Travel, Marsman Tours and Travel, Rajah Tours, Sampaguita Travel, Travel Edge and TRIPS Travel with Skoal Advertising as event organizer and marketing arm.

The group previously handled the highly successful "Island Caravan: The Nautical Highway Adventure" that set the trend for traveling in the country through organized caravan tours along the Nautical Highway System, and "Camp North" that explored the wonders of the North by going places and seeing the sights through a convoy of more than a hundred vehicles.

As Tourism Secretary Ace Durano puts it, "The Island Caravan highlights the Department of Tourism's goal to invite local and foreign tourists to explore and be captivated by the Philippines' enchanting beauty."

For inquiries on the Island Caravan, call TRIPS Travel at 811-4163 or Sampaguita Travel at 817-7620.





Gone fishing...

Patience is required to catch fish, and one shouldn't expect what kind of fish to catch, if any is caught at all. What's important is the effort.

Text and photos by: Alizza C. Butiong

You need not spend thousands of pesos just to have fun this summer. Just prepare your own *kawil* (fishing rod) and ride a fisherman's boat. The rest will be an exciting escape and an eye-opener, guaranteed.

Everything started with that ride on the jeep—not inside but on top of it beside townsfolk with their *bayong*, sack of rice, or chicken in hand. You forget to mind the heat of the noontime sun. You even forget that it's been an hour since the ride started from Poblacion, Nasugbu, to Calayo (one of the 42 barangays that make up Nasugbu town in Batangas).

There is only one jeepney making that single trip from Calayo early in the morning to Poblacion in Nasugbu. Miss this one, and your next trip will literally arrive the next day.

The jeepney arrives in Poblacion just before noontime. The passengers then buy their necessities at the Nasugbu Public Market. By 12, the passengers go back to the jeepney and start the ride back to Calayo.

This time, the jeepney carried a few more passengers than when it left Calayo this morning.

As the jeep rumbled along the rough road, we constantly checked if our seats were as secure as our luggage.

Despite a rough ride, the view from atop the jeepney had given us a great view of the *barrios* and natural wonders along the way. Upon arrival at Calayo (literally translated as "very far"), we looked forward to our next adventure: lunch "extraordinaire" of *adobo* and *sardinas* at Mang Ambrosio Sevilla's home. Mang Busyo, fisherman and a long-time resident of Calayo, would be our tour guide, bodyguard and *barkada* for that day.

Perfect spot

After lunch, we rode on Mang Busyo's banca amd headed for that perfect fishing spot on a shoreline inaccessible by land. There, we built a tent made of tree branches and sack blankets, while some already cast their line into the water. Mang Busyo started a fire and prepared *taktakin*, steaming hot shellfish soup, while showing us how and where to fish. He said patience is required to catch fish, and one shouldn't expect what kind of fish to catch, if any would be caught at all. What's important is the effort.

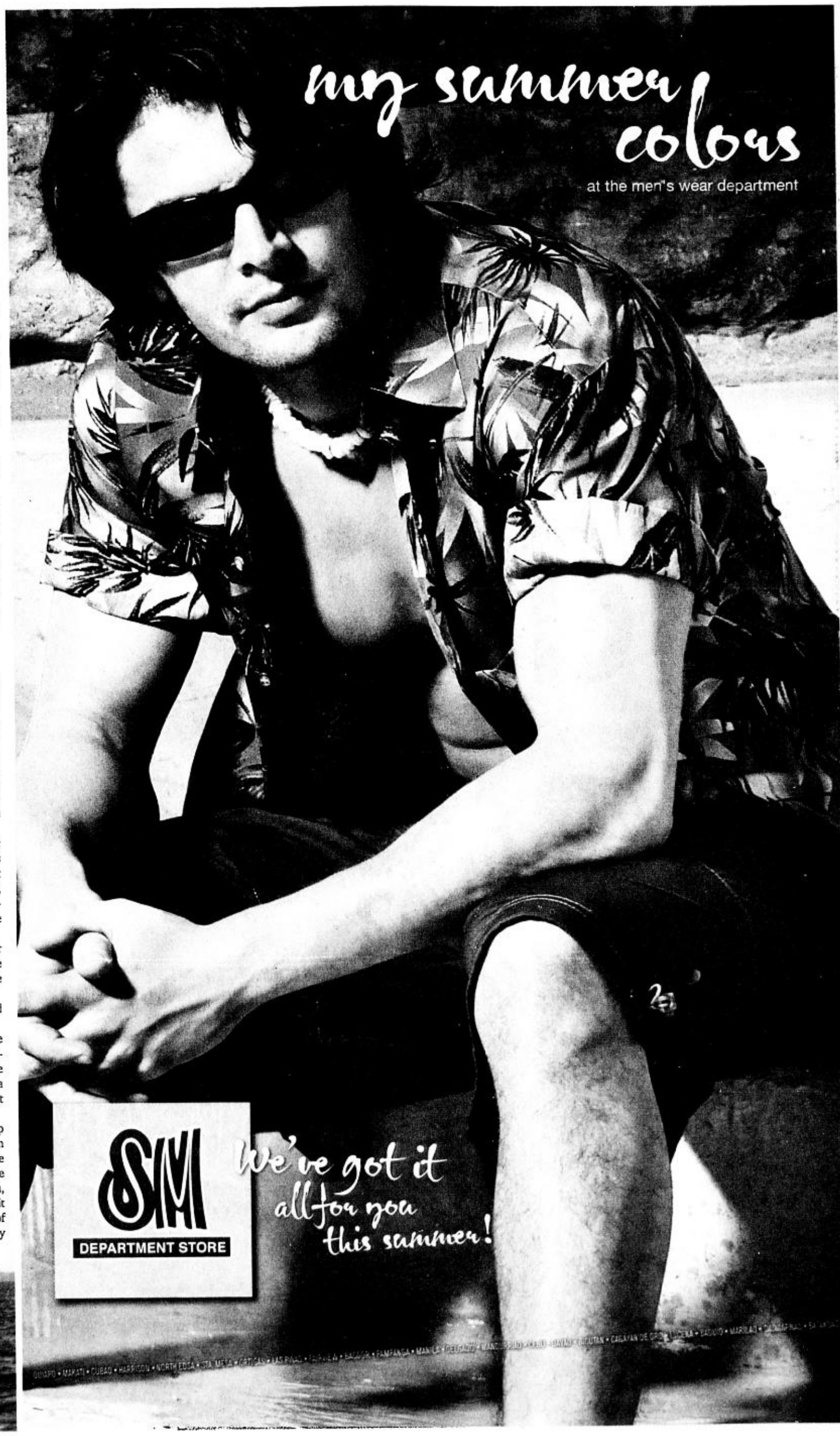
We started by placing our bait on the *kawil's* hook, then cast it to the water. He reminded us to keep the *kawil* as steady as possible so as not to startle the fish. In our first attempt at fishing, we were "lucky" enough to catch *botete*, a non-edible blow fish, after 20 minutes of patience and "expecting nothing".

By sunset, though, we had caught a number of fishes good enough for our supper. And we capped our day with an enjoyable swim in the cool, kind waters of the South China Sea.

Dinner was served, featuring all our good catch grilled to perfection.

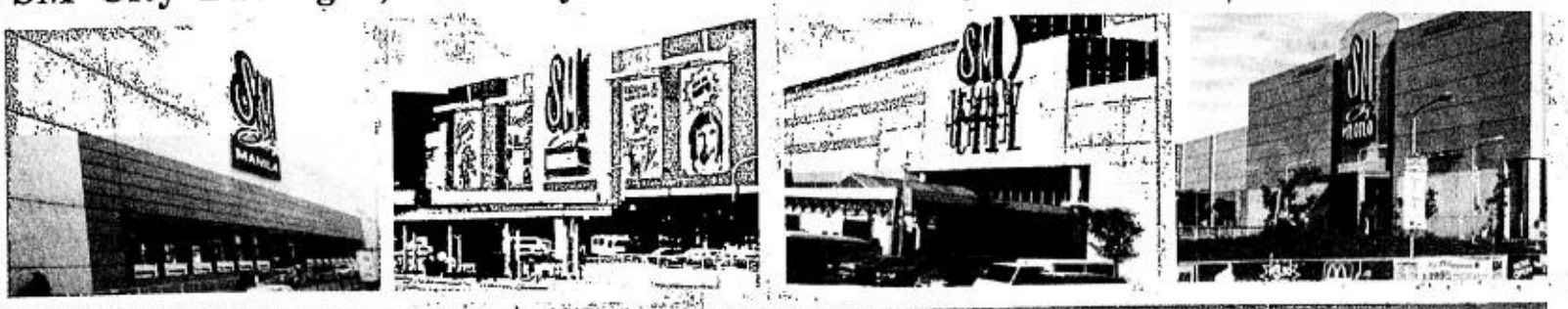
As the bonfire smoldered into the night, we looked forward to the next day's round of fishing, and dreamed of another big catch in the morning. Another big catch before calling it a day and riding again on Mang Busyo's boat headed for home this time.

Back on top of that lone jeepney bobbing up and down on dirt roads on our way back from Calayo to Poblacion, a realization likewise bobbed up and down in my mind. Life is like fishing. It takes patience to have a good catch, Things cannot be rushed, and we should wait for the right time to pull out that one string of opportunity that crosses our path, in a journey of life that's as vast as the ocean.



SM BIG 3-DAY SALE AT 4 SM SUPERMALLS

Spectacular discounts and exciting prizes await shoppers at SM City Manila, SM City Batangas, SM City Cebu and SM City Iloilo on April 1, 2 and 3.



SM CITY MANILA

Yellow tags and value buys at SM SUPERMARKET MANILA

A minimum P500 purchase of groceries with yellow tags entitles shoppers to play the pachingco game. The winners get exciting instant prizes.

A wide selection of Value Packs exclusively bundled for the 3-day sale event combine grocery or fresh items with a free bonus item and tagged at very attractive prices. SM Bonus rice, sugar, hangers and tissue are among the items that come free with the featured grocery or fresh items.

The Value Packs promotion is one more way of saving more money when you shop at SM Supermarket.

SM CITY BATANGAS

Summer sensations at SM City Batangas

Summer fever has hit the fashion racks of SM Department Store Batangas! The widest array of fashion ensembles are yours for the picking - from skimpy beach wear to colorful leisure apparel, not to mention a whole caboodle of accessories that simply scream summer's here!

For the outdoorsy set, we recommend checking out the Coleman combos and inflatable toys, watergear and tents. And of course, tents bring to mind camping shoes, sun shades and caps.

All these and more you can get at half the price! Remember, it's 50% off selected merchandise at SM Department Store on April 1, 2 and 3. What's more, grab the opportunity to take home a foldable chair with cooler for only P399.

Plus, get the chance to win a brand new Ford Everest with every P500 purchase storewide.

Shoppers in these areas are enjoined to take advantage of the huge price breaks on a wide selection of items.

SM CITY ILOILO & SM CITY CEBU

More savings down south at SM City Iloilo and SM City Cebu! Shoppers can enjoy up to 50% off on great fashion finds, home furnishings, beauty and healthcare products and other fabulous bargain buys. Plus, shoppers can get more value for their money when they join the raffle.

SM City Iloilo and Cebu are giving away these exciting prizes per mall:

- 6 JVC 21" Color TVs
- 6 White-Westinghouse 9cu.ft. Refrigerators

Prizes at stake during the 3-day sale on April 1, 2 and 3

MANILA	6sets - HP Desktop Computer, HP Photo Smart Printer and Computer Table with Chair. **Draw date: April 3, 2005**
BATANGAS	6units SUZUKI Smash 110 Motorcycles **Draw date: April 3, 2005**
CEBU and ILOILO	12units JVC 53.34CM(21")Color TVs 12units White-Westinghouse 0.27m3(9cu.ft) Refrigerator **Draw date: April 3, 2005**

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Mall hours are from 10am to 10pm at SM City Manila, SM City Batangas, SM City Iloilo and SM City Cebu.

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REBAP Magazine

A special supplement on the real estate industry

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Maximizing the benefits of the property boom

By Joel V. Nigos

AFTER years of sluggish growth, the real estate industry is experiencing a boom nowadays, albeit slowly. Condominiums and other residential buildings in the metropolis are selling like hotcakes while subdivision projects easily dot the countryside.

The Real Estate Brokers Association of the Philippines or Rebap, a non-stock, non-profit organization of real estate brokers nationwide seeks to maximize the benefits of the upswing in the industry. And in its efforts to take advantage of the current development, it has come up with plans and programs which would specifically benefit its member-brokers and the real estate industry as a whole.

Formation of new chapters, recruitment of new brokers, continuous education of members, advancement in information technology, support of a bill pending in Congress as well as to provide help to other organizations and government agencies are just some of the major plans in the pipeline for the organization this year.

For starters, Rebap has been tapped by the Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PCCI) to give assistance to investors which have eyed hot tourism areas such as Boracay, Cebu, Baguio and Metro Manila. Rebap president Cherith Domingo confirms that there's really a lot of interest in these areas. To be commissioned by a reputable organization says a lot about Rebap, she says. And it is very much willing to offer help.

New chapters

With its current roster of about 400 members, Rebap seeks to increase its membership by 20 percent this year. This is a priority program, says Domingo, as they would try to recruit fresh members by way of creating new chapters in the provinces and reviving the defunct ones. She believes this would help regulate the industry as this would ease out what they refer to as "colorum" brokers. Real brokers are those who have licenses given by the Department of Trade and Industry.

Rebap now has various chapters in Metro Manila and in the provinces. Its Metro Manila chapters include Greenhills, Makati, Manila, Mandaluyong, Pasig, Quezon City, Global City, Central Business District, Lamp (which stand for Las Piñas, Alabang, Muntinlupa and Parañaque), Marikina and Rizal.

Its provincial chapters include Pampanga, Baguio, Laguna, Bacolod, General Santos, Legaspi and Naga. The Tarlac and Cavite chapters have been reactivated while the formation of its Cagayan Valley chapter is ongoing.

REBAP recently partnered with the Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry during the "Investourism Forum" held at the Megatrade Hall, SM Megamall in Mandaluyong City on Feb. 4, 2005. From left, Noel Cobangbang, Rebap chairman Danny Santos, Au Punzalan, Rebap president Cherith Domingo, PCCI vice president for retailing and franchising Samie Lim, Joe Concepcion of Consumer Watch, Rene Julartal, Louie Gonzales and Eden dela Cruz.

Rebap chairman Danny Santos says that the national organization is all-out in forming the new chapters. He, along with Domingo, identify the new chapters which would be created as Iloilo, Davao, Cebu, Dumaguete, Bulacan, Dagupan, San Fernando in La Union, Laoag, Tagaytay, Lipa in Batangas, Palawan and another one in the area of Lucena and Sariaya in Quezon.

Continuous education

Another major program for Rebap this year is the continuous education of its members. Through seminars, it is able to prepare its members for the licensing exams given by DTI every year. Licenses of real estate brokers are renewed every year.

Rebap will conduct the Comprehensive Real Estate Seminar (CRES) in Bataan and Baguio in April and in Cavite in May. This is in time for licensing exams given by DTI in May. The exams are given every last Sunday of May and November every year. CRES will also be given to members this September and October in preparation for the November exams.

Speakers from various government agencies such as the BIR and LRA are also invited to conduct seminars from time to time. This would enable members to gain knowledge and skills as they go about their profession.

Rebap is also holding three general membership meetings every year. Usually held in March, June and September, members benefit from these meetings since they are able to network with co-brokers thereby learning from their experiences.

Pending bill

Rebap is also currently supporting the passage of a bill pending in Congress which seeks to professionalize real estate brokers. The bill would require all real estate transactions to pass through licensed brokers which when fully implemented would discourage buyers and sellers to deal with non-licensed brokers.

"This would at the same time encourage these non-licensed brokers to get licenses and be a member of organizations such as Rebap," says Domingo.

The bill which is now up for third and final reading also seeks to change the present setup between a government agency and Rebap.

"We're pushing that instead of DTI and HLURB in which Rebap is currently under, we want it to be transferred to the Professional Regulation Commission," she says. With PRC, she claims, brokers would be further regulated.

Rebap expects the bill to be passed by yearend.

Advancement in technology

And with the advancement in technology, Rebap is making use of its advantages for the benefit of its members.

Its website, which is now three years old, is exclusively available to members. A project of the Rebap IT committee, the website is now interactive and makes property listings and contact persons easily available to brokers.

Says Santos, "Through this we'll be able to reach out to more people. We can even tap the international market since our website can be accessed abroad. This means better business for us."

The Rebap IT committee is also holding IT classes for members. "This would better equip our members with technology as computer literacy is becoming a must in today's world," he stresses.

With its resolve to push for the passage of a bill in Congress which seeks to professionalize real estate brokers, its program of reaching out to more brokers by recruiting them and by forming new chapters in the provinces, and its continuing education of its members, Rebap is taking efforts to maximize the benefits it would get with the upswing in the real estate industry.

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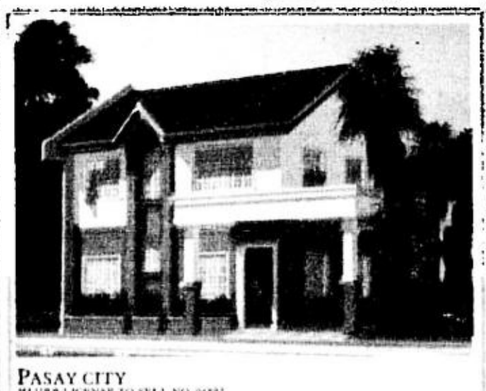

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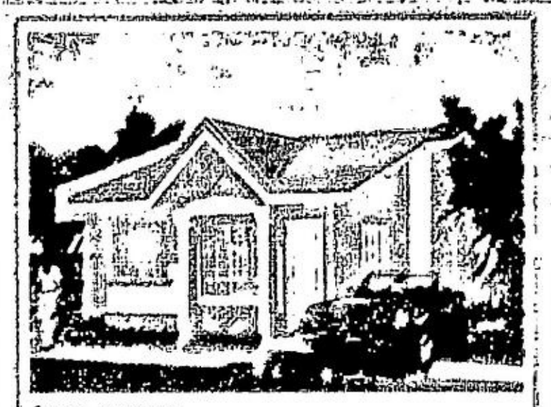

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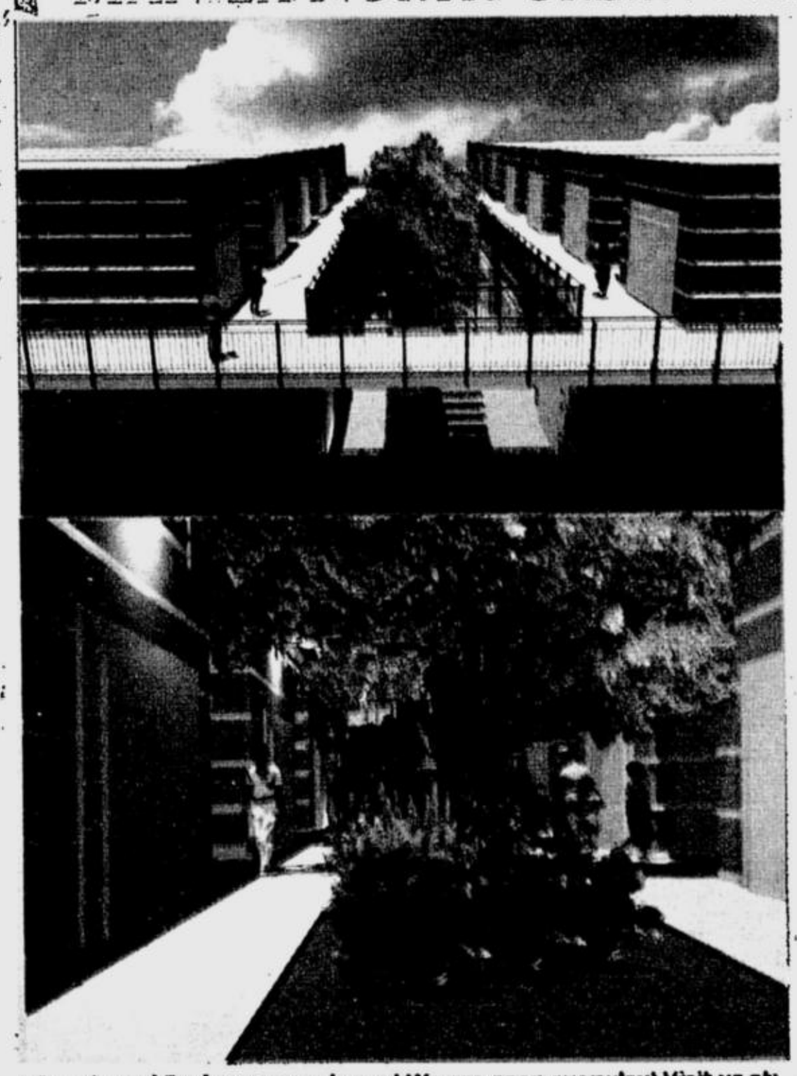

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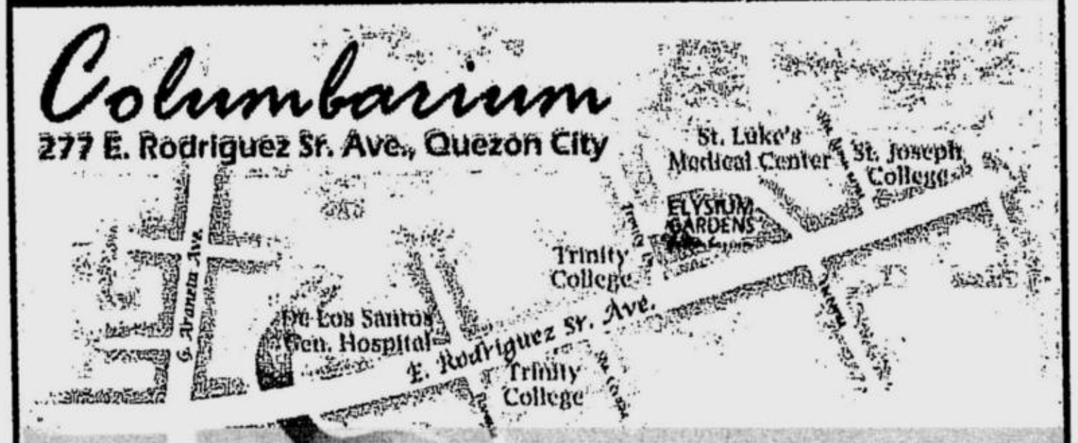

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Stateland: Helping build a nation with high quality and affordable housing

STATELAND Inc., one of the leading real estate developers in the Philippines today, continues to pursue project expansion and development in new areas with potential growth and rapid development.

The company is now developing a 21-hectare property in Cabuyao, Laguna, into a medium-cost housing project named Gran Seville. Gran Seville will cater to locally based families and Filipinos who are presently living abroad who may want to invest in properties that will appreciate in value or will become their permanent residences when they return to their native land for good. The village is also envisioned to tap the overseas Filipino workers (OFW) and retirees who are based in various countries of the world. The project was launched in October last year with attractive promotional discounts.

Stateland is known for its creative designs and good quality real estate development. It has developed several residential subdivisions and condominium projects in the strategic locations of Manila, Quezon City, Pasay City and in the growth areas of Dasmariñas, Cavite, and San Jose del Monte, Bulacan. The company's fast-selling project at the moment is the British-inspired and delicately planned subdivision called Chester Place—a subdivision complete with all the facilities and amenities to fit a convenient and comfortable lifestyle in a fast-growing community. It is also surrounded by nearby resorts, medical schools and health service centers.

The company aims for consistent growth and diversification in varied classes of real estate projects catering to the high, medium and low-income markets. It will remain a major player in the housing industry with its continued expansion covering a wide range of products and services for the total satisfaction of its valued clients.

Through the years, the company has maintained its strength and stability. This is credited to the intellectual minds of its board of directors led by its Chairman Sabino Padilla Jr., Vice Chairman Daniel Y. Chiong, President Reynaldo T. Cometa, Executive Vice President Elizabeth C. Chow, Treasurer Alice C. Gohoc, and directors Chung Tiong Tay, Vicente T. Paterno, Washington Sycip and Simeon M. Valdez.

More information about Stateland's projects and developments can be accessed through www.stateland.com.ph. You can also get in touch with Delie U. Chua at tel. nos. 244-6818 or 244-6877 or at cell phone no. (0917) 827-4553.

Baguio City's 'The Village at Rainbow's End'

WHERE in Baguio City does a village sit right at "rainbow's end"?

Off the city's Naguilian Road and driving upward on Quezon Hill, entering Tacay Road and traversing it to the top, one will come upon a 19-hectare masterplanned first-class subdivision with a nature-inspired theme. Entering the gate, one is greeted by two wood planks proclaiming the place as "The Village: Rainbow's End."

Located high on a mountaintop offering natural surroundings and cool fresh air, a view of other hills, the sky and the far-off sea, the site seems far from Baguio's urban center. But it is really just a few minutes drive from the SM City, the Session Road, the Burnham Park and the City Hall.

The Village offers a serene ecological ambiance amid spacious paved roads lined with bountiful foliage. With a fenced-off perimeter, 24-hour roving security forces and a guarded gate, the village has curbs and gutters and a 750,000-gallon water reservoir. The place is fully secured, peaceful and safe for all residents.

Known as the Forbes Park of Baguio City, Rainbow's End Village is located at one of the highest points in Baguio set in the most stable location with the most preserved natural landscape and features yet with the comfort and convenience of modern living. Commercial facilities include business centers, clubhouse, horse stables, hangars, two helipads, and a fitness center with a Japanese teahouse soon to be made available.

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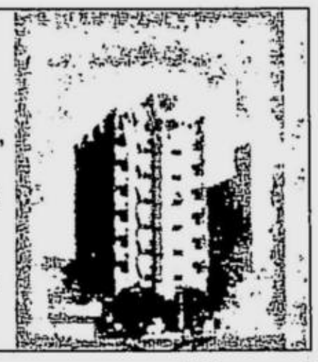

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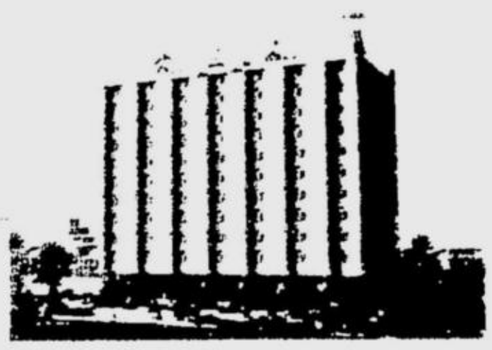

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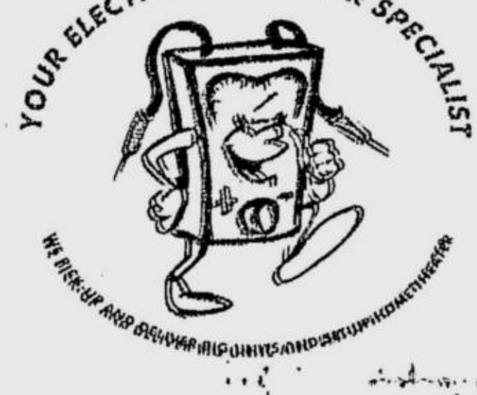

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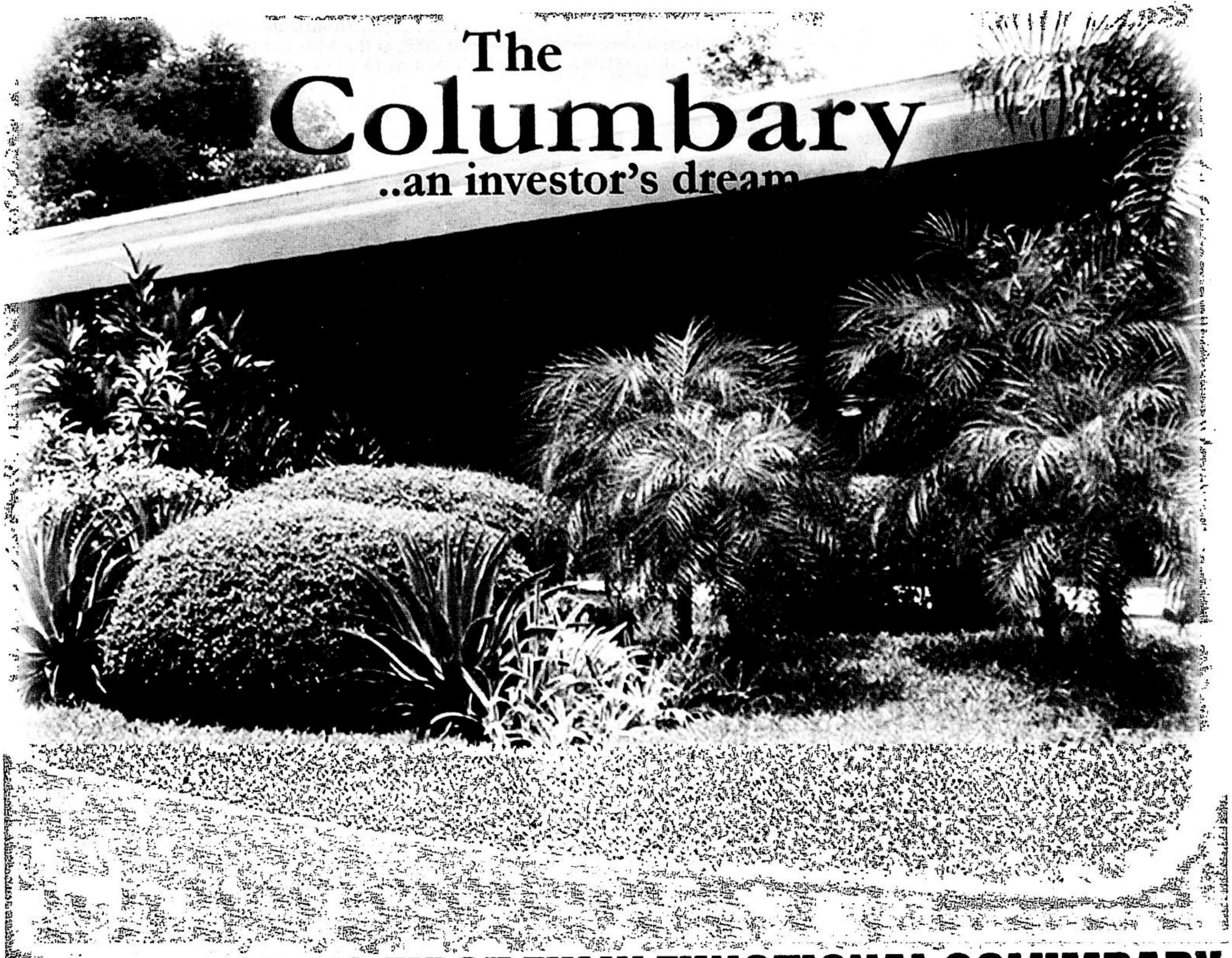

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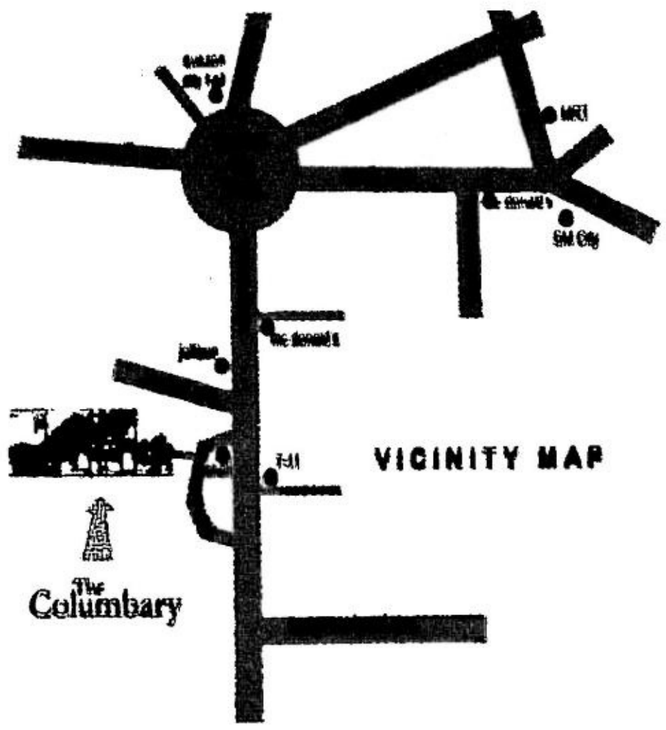

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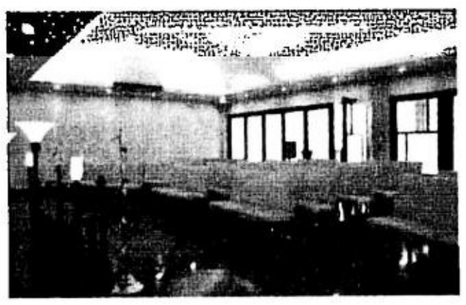

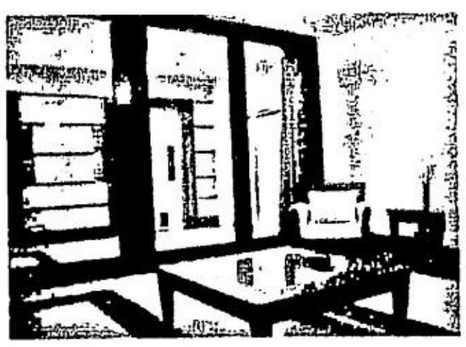

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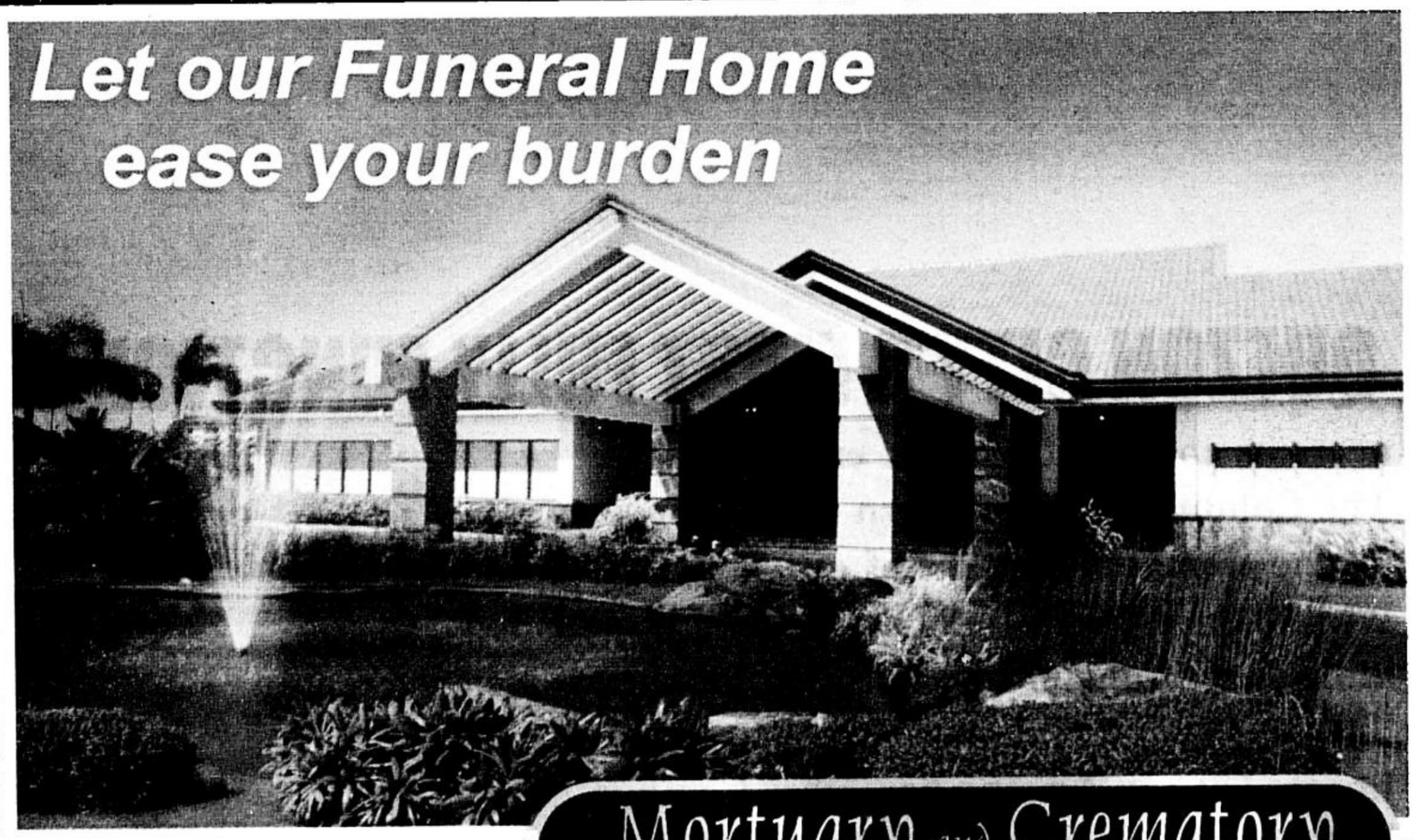

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■ Inquestor files / A10
Two ladies and a gentleman

■ News / A4
Cavite's golf clubs face new taxes on water, trees, plants

■ Across / A17
Cebu provincial gov't rejects 4-day workweek scheme

■ Metro / A19
Motorcycle 'solo taxis' gearing for comeback in Metro

■ INQUIRER IN-DEPTH
Walang susuko! Lahat palaban
INSIDE THE INQUIRER DEBATES NGAYONG ALAS 11 N.G., SA ABC!

Finally, parents of Terri Schiavo score legal victory

ATLANTA—The parents of Terri Schiavo, a severely brain-damaged woman whose fate has made world headlines, scored a rare legal victory on Wednesday when a US federal appeals court agreed to consider their petition for a new hearing on whether to reconnect their daughter's feeding tube.

The 11th US Circuit Court of Appeals ruled

FINALLY / A8

PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

email: feedback@inquirer.com.ph | Thursday, March 31, 2005 ★★ 46 pages / 4 sections / Vol. 20 / No. 111 P18 | website: www.inq7.net

Special session on VAT off to shaky start over quorum

By Juliet Labog-Javellana and Michael Lim Ubac

THE SPECIAL session for the passage of the value-added tax (VAT) measure yesterday got off to a shaky start after the Senate was forced to suspend its session for nearly two hours to wait for the House of Representatives to

SPECIAL/ A6

GMA popularity plunges–survey

Lowest rating since she assumed power

By Gil Cabacungan Jr.

THE STAR of President Macapagal-Arroyo continues to wane as her approval rating plummeted to its lowest level in more than four years in power partly due to rising prices and allegations of widespread corruption, according to results of a survey conducted by Pulse Asia Inc. early this month.

The survey also showed that most Filipinos—known for their ready smiles and upbeat dispositions—were pessimistic about their quality of life, with six out of every 10 saying they are worse off now than last year.

The rate is the same as in the previous survey last October. But in the latest poll only 14 percent said they were faring better now than they were last year, down from 17 percent last October.

The survey was conducted nationwide from March 3 to 16 and covered 1,200 representative adults. It had a margin of error of plus or minus three percentage points.

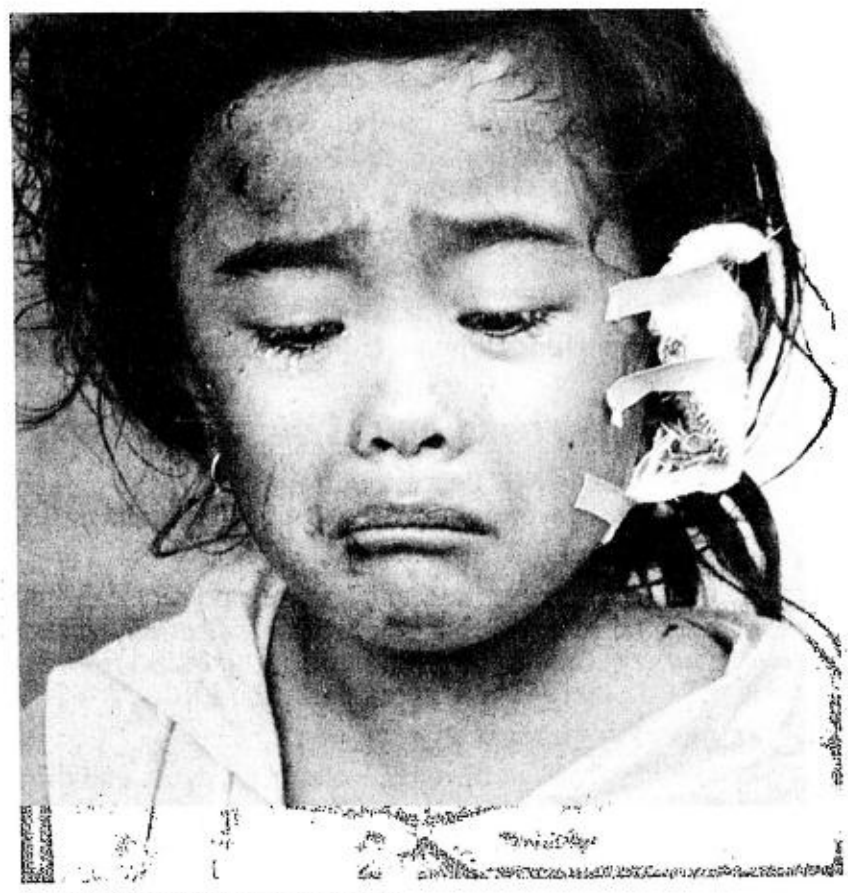
Pulse Asia said Ms Arroyo got an approval rating of 38 percent, down from 41 percent in October and 55 percent in June last year. Her disapproval rating remained at 34 percent in March, the same level as in the October survey.

Ana Maria L. Tabunda, Pulse Asia executive director, said the President posted the lowest approval rating and the highest disapproval rating among the country's top five government officials.

Malacañang is hardly showing any stress over the President's eroding popularity.

GMA POPULARITY/ A7

HANDS-ON PRESIDENT. Coffee seedlings get the personal attention of President Arroyo at the nursery in Upi, Maguindanao, during her visit to the ARMM region on Wednesday. MALACAÑANG PHOTO



BEHOLD A CHILD OF SORROW
Yumni, 6, a victim of the massive earthquake that hit Nias Island, Indonesia last Monday, needs to have her hand amputated. The quake killed hundreds and sparked fears of another region-wide tsunami. *(Stories in The World, Second Front Page.)* AP

BAYI AWARDS

10 exemplary women in politics, gov't cited

By Ma. Ceres P. Doyo

"I'VE EXPERIENCED the breakup of a family, climbing the gate to go home. Now my family understands what I am doing."

Unabashed, Mercedita Naldoza, national chair of the Confederation of Independent Unions in the Public Sector, shared what it was like to be a woman involved in trade unionism.

Doris Obena's daughter died while she was campaigning for a seat in the Sangguniang Bayan of Catigbia, Bohol, even as she warded off threats from the communist New People's Army in last year's elections. Bravely she pushed on.

Marlene Magayanes promised herself she would not hold back the tears when receiving her citation. She told the audience in Filipino: "You know how to give recognition to those who are unknown, to those down there where the real battles are fought."

These women were among the 10 who received the First Bayi Citation for Exemplary Women in Politics and Governance at the Club Filipino in San Juan yesterday. The citation came from the Barangay-Bayan Governance Consortium (BBGC or "Batman Consortium") which is composed of 42 NGOs involved in participatory democracy and good governance all over the country. The affair marked the end of Women's Month.

Bayi is a contraction of the

10 EXEMPLARY/ A6

'MERE TECHNICALITY'

FPJ camp hits court ruling: They blew it

By Philip C. Tubeza

THE SUPREME Court missed the opportunity to legally settle all doubts about the result of the May 2004 presidential election when it dismissed the election protest of the late actor Fernando Poe Jr., according to House Minority Leader Francis Escudero.

"This should have been the legal opportunity for us to know the truth without resorting to other means, but it was trashed," Escudero, spokesperson of the Koalisyon ng Nagkakaisang Pilipino, said yesterday.

"We are dismayed and we do not agree with the decision because it seems that [the justices] were not that interested to know the truth. They used a mere technicality to dismiss the petition. And they admit to this. They mentioned that the decision was based on a technicality, that they were using a procedural provision," he said.

Escudero also said Poe's widow, Susan Roces, was saddened by the decision of the high court sitting as the Presidential Electoral Tribunal (PET) to also dismiss her motion to substitute for her husband.

"She should have been given a copy first before it was released to the media. It cannot be avoided that [she] feels hurt, saddened, and opposed to the decision," he added.

Roces is withholding comment on the PET's Tuesday ruling until she formally receives a copy.

Poe's followers plan to set up a "People's Electoral Tribunal" in their quest for justice for the late presidential contender.

"We are looking at it as an alternative venue where we can present all evidence of cheating in the May elections," Rez Cortez, leader of the National Council of Concerned Volunteers (NCCV) for FPJ, told the INQUIRER.

"We have always said that we will go for the legal option. But now we feel that we have run out of legal options," Cortez said.

Escudero said he was not aware of plans by some members of the opposition to resort to street protests. But he said these protests should be "respected" as long as they were peaceful.

FPJ CAMP/ A6

Esperat kin: Probe national gov't officials

By Armand N. Nocum and Christian V. Esguerra

RELATIVES of the slain crusading journalist Marlene Esperat yesterday asked police to widen the investigation into her murder to include ranking national government officials whom she had sued for graft.

The relatives, who asked not to be named, raised fears that justice might not be fully served with the list of suspects limited to officials in Central Mindanao.

"[Police] must look at all the

ESPERAT / A8

NINO JESUS ORBETA/PDI SOUTHERN LUZON BUREAU

SINARAPAN discovered in 1902 in Lake Buhi, Camarines Sur, is only 7-8 mm long.

JASON ARAGON

TABIOS, 5-6 mm long, found in Danao Lake, in Polangui, Albay.

STOUT INFANTFISH is only 7 mm long; lives around Australia's Great Barrier Reef.

Fishy tale: So, what's the smallest?

By Gil Francis G. Arevalo
PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

POLANGUI, Albay—So which is the smallest fish in the world?

A. Dwarf pygmy goby (*Pandaka pygmaea*) B. "*Sinarapan*" (*Mistichthys luzonensis*) C. Stout infantfish (*Schindleria brevipinguis*)

To residents of this second-class municipality, it's none of the above. They insist that it's "*tabios*," which are found in the lakelets and streams of Lake Danao.

They support the claim of a local university professor, Ramon Salire, who discovered "*tabios*" in 1988 and described it as thin and with a transparent body, and different from the "*sinarapan*" found in Lake Buhi in Camarines Sur.

The Danao species has yet to be scientifically identified.

FISHY/ A8

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Northern Luzon will have mostly cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers while Mindanao will experience mostly cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and thunderstorms. The rest of the country will be partly cloudy to at times cloudy with isolated rainshoers or thunderstorms. SOURCE: PAGASA

COMPILED BY: CHONA GALANG, PDI RESEARCH/03/31/05

Metro Manila	Partly Cloudy	Iloilo/Bacolod	Partly Cloudy
Baguio	Partly Cloudy	Roxas	Partly Cloudy
Tuguegarao	Cloudy with Rains	Cebu	Partly Cloudy
Laoag	Cloudy with Rains	Tacloban	Partly Cloudy
Clark Zone	Partly Cloudy	Gen. Santos	Cloudy with Rains
Tagaytay	Partly Cloudy	Zamboanga	Cloudy with Rains
Legazpi	Partly Cloudy	Cagayan de Oro	Cloudy with Rains
Calapan	Partly Cloudy	Davao	Cloudy with Rains

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Gov't resigned to losing 1 SMC seat

By Alcuin Papa

THE PRESIDENTIAL Commission on Good Government said yesterday it was resigned to the fact that the government might lose at least one seat in the board of food and beverage giant San Miguel Corp.

In a talk with reporters yesterday at the Club Filipino, PCGG chair Haydee Yorac said the P2.1 billion accumulated dividends of the Coconut Industry Investment Fund (CIIF) to be used to take part in SMC's stock rights offering this month might not be enough to keep all five board seats of the government in the company.

"There is nothing we can do. We have to be contented with the P2 billion. We might lose at least one seat," Yorac said.

For the government to undertake a full participation in the rights offering to prevent a dilution of its stake in SMC amounting to around 41 percent, it would have to raise around P4.5 billion.

Yorac explained that to borrow more money for a full participation is difficult since it would mean the government would also have to pay the interest to this loan.

"In all likelihood, we would have a difficult time with the interest," she said.

But Yorac also said that the commission is still trying "other arrangements" in a bid to preserve the government's stake in the company.

"We think as conservators of a part of the company (CIIF), government has a duty to conserve its value. We will do our best to save the value of the CIIF shares without subjecting it to the danger that we would have difficulty with debts afterwards," she stressed.

Albay Rep. Joey Salceda, an adviser of President Macapagal-Arroyo, had earlier said the government would tap into the P2.1 billion accumulated dividends of the CIIP to pay for half of the shares it was entitled to in San Miguel's rights issue.

Although a partial subscription, Salceda said the P2.1 billion investment would be enough to maintain the government's five board seats in SMC because the CIIF shares would only be diluted by less than one percentage point to 27 percent.

The President had earlier ordered the sale of the sequestered San Miguel shares after the Sandiganbayan rejected an appeal by SMC president Eduardo "Danding" Cojuangco questioning the government's claim to the 27 percent interest in SMC acquired through coco levy funds in the 1970s.

The government is also contesting Cojuangco's claim to another 19 percent interest in SMC in a separate case.

The sale of the sequestered stake of 27 percent together with the 14 percent combined shares of the Social Security System and the Government Service and Insurance System would give potential bidders a big bloc in the country's biggest food and beverage firm.

COPW BULLETIN NO. 6

AN APPEAL TO CONGRESS:

VAT MUST BE PASSED, MUST BE FAIR AND EQUITABLE, AND MUST COVER ALL SECTORS

We hope the Senate, during the 3-day (March 30 - April 1) special session, will pass the expanded value added tax (VAT) and will reconcile with the approved House bill at the bicameral conference.

We urge the Department of Finance (DOF) and the other concerned agencies to work as a team and synchronize their revenue projections.

Different figures came out during the 10 public hearings on the VAT. The discrepancies made it difficult for the Senate, the House, the COPW, and the public to appreciate how the VAT impacts on various sectors of society.

We ask the Executive Branch to make public the final corrected revenue figures which the Senate, the House, and consumer groups like the COPW were requesting so that there is resolution to all pending concerns and issues on the VAT.

We thank the thousands who supported the COPW in its call for a fair and equitable VAT. We did our best.

VAT MUST BE IMPOSED ON ALL SECTORS

ALL SECTORS should NOT be exempt from VAT. Those presently exempted from the VAT must be covered so the government can establish an audit trail.

2% VAT ON POWER

- We favor a 2% VAT on power which should be increased later to 4%. The transition should ease the impact on the consumers. They, after all, will bear the burden when the true costs of power are reflected estimated to be P2.80 from September 26th when the petition for power rate increases is acted on by the ERC.

3% VAT ON PETROLEUM PRODUCTS

- We favor a lower VAT of 3% on petroleum products and the retention of the specific (excise) tax of P4.35/liter and P1.63 on gasoline and diesel, respectively, because the revenue to be gained from VAT will be substantially lower than the current specific tax.
- We are NOT in favor of the "NO pass provision" for petroleum products provided the DOE and the DOF ensure that whenever there are price changes ONLY THE NET VAT PAID BY THE OIL COMPANIES IS PASSED ON TO THE CONSUMER.
- We are NOT in favor of the proposal of the BIG four oil companies, that control 85% of the market, to have a SINGLE VAT rate for gasoline, diesel, kerosene, and LPG.
- This means that the transport sector and power generating companies will pay the same VAT rate for diesel as they would for gasoline, which will all be passed on to the consumers.
- It was the oil companies that informed us, during the public hearing in the House, that the DOE has vast powers to check any abuses on the part of the oil companies as provided in Chapters 3 and 4 of the Oil Deregulation Law.
- We, therefore, urge Government to invoke Section 14 (d) of the Oil Deregulation Law, which states that "any report from any person of an unreasonable rise in the price of petroleum products shall be immediately acted upon by the DOE-DOJ Task Force and nothing prevents the Task Force from investigating and/or filing the necessary complaint with the proper court or agency moto propio."

1 1/2% VAT ON AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS IN THEIR ORIGINAL STATE: We favor the 1 1/2% VAT with a presumptive input tax of 1 1/2% which will have a net effect that producers of rice, fish, beef, pork, vegetables and fruits will NOT pay VAT. However, Agro-processors will NOT be entitled to a presumptive input tax of 1.5%.

2% VAT ON AGRICULTURAL AND ELECTRIC COOPERATIVES: We favor a 2% VAT rate on sales exceeding P700,000. This WON'T encourage abuse, because those below the P700,000 threshold will pay the 3% percentage tax.

6% VAT ON PROCESSED AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS: We favor the House proposal to reduce the VAT from 10% to 6% on processed agricultural products like sardines, refined sugar, cooking oil, pandesal, and instant noodles.

10% VAT ON DOCTORS AND LAWYERS: We favor a 10% VAT when their gross income exceeds P700,000 a year. Doctors who work in government and small private hospitals and clinics and small-time practicing lawyers need NOT worry as they are exempt from VAT but are subject to the 3% percentage tax.

We leave it to the Statesmanship of the Senate, the House, and the President to assure consumers that the VAT bill that will be passed will be fair and equitable to ALL.

FINALLY, THERE ARE CERTAIN BURDENS WE MUST ALL SHARE. THE EXPANDED VAT IS ONE SUCH BURDEN. LET US BEAR IT AND MOVE FORWARD. FOR THE GOOD OF THE CONSUMERS, OF BUSINESS, OF THE GOVERNMENT, AND OF THE NATION.

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GMA condoles with Indonesian quake victims

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo yesterday offered condolences to the victims of the deadly quake in Indonesia and said the Philippines would be sending a humanitarian mission to help in relief efforts.

The Palace announced yesterday that the President would be flying to Indonesia in late April for the Asian-African summit in Jakarta from April 21 to 23 and the golden jubilee of the Asian-African Conference of 1995 in Bandung on April 24.

In a statement, the President also called for a national day of prayer among all faiths for the victims of the Indonesian quake.

"In behalf of our people, I extend our sympathies to our brothers in Indonesia who have continued to suffer loss and pain on account of another earthquake," she said.

"Our solidarity with Indonesia is strong in all humanitarian fields, as well as for peace and security," she said.

The Philippines earlier dispatched a humanitarian team to Indonesia to help victims of the Dec. 26, 2004 tsunami.

16-man mission

Health Secretary Manuel Dayrit said the Philippines would dispatch a 16-member medical team to help victims of the deadly earthquake that hit the northwest Indonesian island of Nias on Monday night.

The team of nurses, sanitary engineers, psychologists, a surgeon, a pediatrician and an internist would be flying out within the week on the orders of Ms Arroyo, Dayrit said.

The team will determine the health needs of those displaced by the killer quake and will work to ensure the supply of safe potable water and set up proper waste disposal and implement food safety at the evacuation centers.

The Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology meanwhile said that while the country was relatively safe from a tsunami threat, Philippine resorts should ramp up their disaster preparedness for the sake of vacationers.

Disaster-conscious

The Phivolcs is embarking on a campaign to make domestic resorts, particularly those that are popular among foreign tourists, include safety tips and instructions in their brochures and promotional literature.

Seismology chief Jane Punongbayan said that since the Dec. 26 tsunami which killed 200,000 people in Asia, Philippine resorts have become more conscious about their disaster preparedness.

Some of the more exclusive resorts like Amanpulo in Palawan and some community resorts in Nasugbu, Batangas, have asked Phivolcs to conduct disaster preparedness workshops which usually discuss safety instructions and the geological characteristics of the area, including projections of the strongest ground shaking that could happen in the next 50 years.

However, some local governments and resort communities are uneasy about another proposal from Phivolcs to put up tsunami markers in areas that have been hit by earthquake-generated tsunamis in the past.

Some insist tsunami markers might have a dampening effect on tourism.

But Punongbayan argued that putting up tsunami markers would serve to promote the image of the Philippines as a country that is prepared for disasters.

Tsunami marker

Baler town in Aurora province put up the first tsunami marker in the Philippines in January, two months after flash floods and landslides caused by three successive typhoons killed and displaced thousands of residents.

Baler, one of at least 34 coastal areas that have been hit by tsunami, experienced a tsunami in April 1970.

Baler's tsunami marker, a plain concrete monument about two meters tall, includes the date of the tsunami and reminds the people that a disaster could happen again.

Punongbayan said the biggest tsunamis recorded in the Philippines from 1627 to 1994 were in the Moro Gulf, where around 2,000 people were killed in 1976, in Casiguran, Quezon, in 1968, Aurora in 1970, and Calapan, Oriental Mindoro in 1994. *Blanche S. Rivera and Leila B. Salaverria with reports from Christine Avendaño and AFP*

4-day workweek starts next week

By Christine O. Avendano

IT'S FINAL.

Starting next week, all employees of all national government agencies will report to work only four times a week to conserve energy amid surging crude oil prices.

Malacañang released yesterday Administrative Order no. 117, which President Macapagal-Arroyo signed last Monday, instructing government employees to work from 7:30 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. from Monday to Thursday of each workweek, except on holidays, from April 4 to May 31. The employees are to render 10 hours a day of work.

The A.O. provided "for adjusted official hours in departments, bureaus, offices and other agencies in the executive branch, including government-owned and controlled corporations, for the months of April and May 2005."

The President said it was "imperative for the government to lead the way in energy conservation, without jeopardizing the delivery of public service, in order to mitigate the impact of the oil price increases on the government's fiscal position and the country's dollar reserves." State-owned corporations would also adopt the new workweek.

Exempted were the armed forces, police, fire protection bureau, jail and management bureau, coast guard, customs and internal revenue bureaus, hospitals and health centers as well as public schools and universities with summer classes.

For the rest of the bureaucracy, Fridays join Saturdays and Sundays as non-working days for the next two months. *With AFP report*

STANDARD-TODAY MERGER

Solon asked to answer conflict-of-interest raps

THE BOARD of trustees of the Philippine Press Institute yesterday decided to ask Rep. Teodoro "Teddyboy" Locsin to comment on the complaint for conflict of interest filed against him by the Manila Standard Employees Association.

Locsin is expected to return on Friday from a trip abroad.

The PPI board decided not to discuss Standard union's complaints about the business and labor aspects of the merger between the Standard and Today, saying that it was an internal matter of the merged Manila Standard Today.

LOCSIN

The board took cognizance of a letter of the Today editorial staff headed by Lourdes M. Fernandez commenting on the complaint filed by the MSEA.

In its complaint, the Standard union said Locsin was facing a conflict of interest, being a congressman and the publisher of the Manila Standard Today at the same time. The association said Locsin's dual position was a direct violation of three provisions of the Philippine Journalists' Code of Ethics:

"Article 5-I shall not let personal motives or interests influence me in the performance of my duties; nor shall I accept or offer any present, gift or other consideration of a nature which may cast doubt on my professional integrity.

"Article 10-I shall accept only such tasks as are compatible with the integrity and dignity of my profession, invoking the 'conscience clause' when duties imposed on me conflict with the voice of my conscience.

"Article 11-I shall conduct myself in public or while performing my duties as journalist in such a manner as to maintain the dignity of my profession. When I doubt, decency should be my watchword."

In their letter to the PPI board, the Today editors and reporters said that in all the years that they had worked with Locsin, "we have seen no instance where he made any imposition on the treatment of stories, sanctioned any journalist in his employ for the particular handling of a subject matter, or prevented the editors and reporters under him from pursuing any coverage in the manner they [saw] fit."

Present at the PPI board meeting were Amado Macasaet of Malaya, PPI chair-president; Isagani Yambot of the Philippine Daily Inquirer, vice chair-vice president; Ronaldo Romero of the BusinessWorld, treasurer; Jose Pavia of Mabuhay, executive director; Antonio Katigbak of the Philippine Star; and Lourdes M. Fernandez of Manila Standard-Today. Fernandez inhibited herself from the voting.

Others who concurred in the board decision by phone were Augusto Villanueva of the Journal Group; Johnny Mercado of the Press Foundation of Asia, institutional trustee; Eduardo Jalbuna, trustee for the Visayas; and Antonio Ajero, trustee for Mindanao.

Rogelio Salazar, who formerly represented the Manila Standard in the board, said he would send a representative to the meeting but the latter failed to show up.

In their letter to the PPI, the Today editors and reporters said that in any critical issue, Locsin has acted "in favor of upholding the judgment of the editorial staff, even on matters occasionally critical of his friends or political allies."

The Today staff answered the MSEA complaint on three fronts:

1. Law-They said that the Constitution only prohibits legislators who are lawyers from appearing in any court of law during their term in Congress.

2. Ethics - They said that "the question of ethics becomes material in situations where the potential conflict of interest—a potential that is present in all newspapers and with all media owners and publishers as well as gatekeepers—is activated by a real issue or a tangible conflict."

"If all 'potential' conflicts of interest were to be raised against publishers and media owners, no one—not even in advanced democracies where the press is supposedly more sophisticated—would pass the ethical bar," the Today staff members said.

3. Practice-The editors and reporters said they were puzzled by the views of the Standard union on the "potential impairment" of Locsin's independence as a journalist because of his role as a congressman.

Citing an INQUIRER report, they said that at one instance, the union asked Standard majority owner Enrique Razon to explain how an "opposition congressman" fits into a "proadministration paper."

Yet on March 28, they said, union officer Jing Villamente expressed concern that Locsin's independence was put in question by his being a congressman.

"This to us implies a two-faced view of independence, a contrived concern that is betrayed by the illogic: they worry that his being opposition congressman will impair his journalistic independence but they do not worry that the Standard's self-described proadministration stance will impair that same independence," the Today staff members said.

The Standard union filed its complaint with the PPI on March 21 but it was discussed only yesterday by the PPI board because of the long Holy Week weekend.

In calling yesterday's meeting, Macasaet allayed fears expressed by the Standard union that an "old boys' club" in the PPI might protect Locsin.

The PPI is a national organization of Philippine newspapers. Among its aims are the promotion of ethical standards and the professional development of Filipino journalists.

Oil firms hike prices for 5th time in a month

By Abigail L. Ho

FOR THE FIFTH time this month and the second in less than a week, new oil players Flying V and Eastern Petroleum Corp. again jacked up prices of their gasoline, diesel and kerosene by 50 centavos a liter.

Flying V hiked its prices at 12:01 a.m. yesterday, while Eastern Petroleum followed suit at 12:01 a.m. today.

Unioil Petroleum Philippines Inc. also said it would be implementing its own price adjustments within the week, but did not give a specific day.

Caltex Philippines Inc. said it would continue to closely monitor the market before making a decision.

Oil refiners Petron Corp. and Pilipinas Shell Petroleum Corp. had yet to announce their own price adjustments as of press time.

The continuing surge in world oil prices prompted Flying V and Eastern Petroleum to initiate yet another price hike.

According to data from the Department of Energy, the benchmark Dubai crude already hit a March 1-29 average price of $45.72 a barrel, almost $6 higher than last month's average of $39.87 a barrel.

The price of unleaded gasoline based on the Mean of Platts Singapore (MOPS) benchmark for refined petroleum products also soared to an average of $59.45 a barrel in the first 29 days of March, from only $54.27 a barrel in February.

The price of MOPS-based diesel likewise surged to an all-time high March 1-29 average of $67.14 a barrel, almost $12 higher than the February average of $55.63 a barrel.

Despite the decision of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (Opec) to hike production by 500,000 barrels a day starting April 1, world oil prices had continued to soar.

Ironically, on the day the Opec announced its hike in production, international prices surged even higher, going against historical trends.

Prices usually go down with every Opec announcement of an increase in output.

By April 1, Opec's production quota will be 27.5 million barrels a day, with the possibility of another hike of 500,000 barrels a day should the situation call for it.

Even with the extremely high oil prices in the world market, however, demand had not let up. Demand had even been on the uptrend lately due to the prolonged winter in Europe and the northeastern part of the

United States.

Since the start of the year, gasoline prices have gone up six times by a total of P3.10 a liter, while prices of diesel fuel have increased seven times by a total of P3.30 a liter.

But they offer more discounts

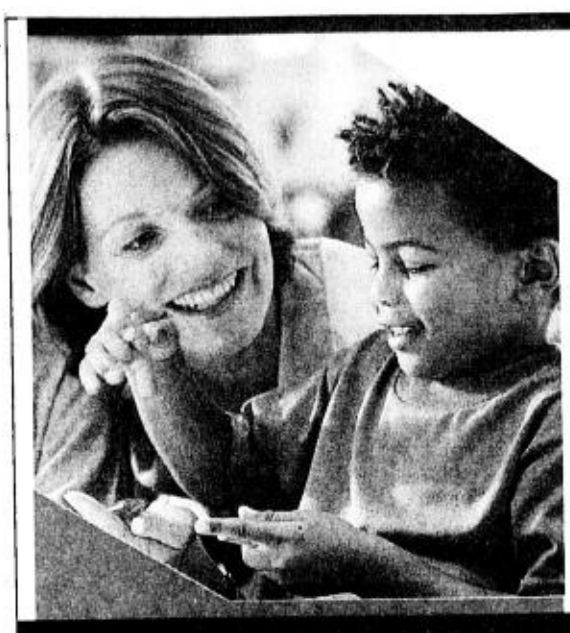
By Abigail L. Ho

TO CUSHION the impact of escalating oil prices on the public transport sector, local oil firms yesterday committed to add 130 more stations to the 247 station currently offering diesel discounts to public utility vehicles nationwide.

In a meeting with the Department of Energy, Department of Transportation and Communications, Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board, and various transport groups, the oil firms agreed to make discounted diesel more accessible to more public utility vehicles.

Energy Secretary Raphael Lotilla said the government was also looking at all possible ways to alleviate the effects of rising oil prices to the public transport sector and to commuters.

"Oil prices are beyond the control of the government. However, the government is exploring all means to cushion the impact of rising oil prices to the people," he said in a statement yesterday.



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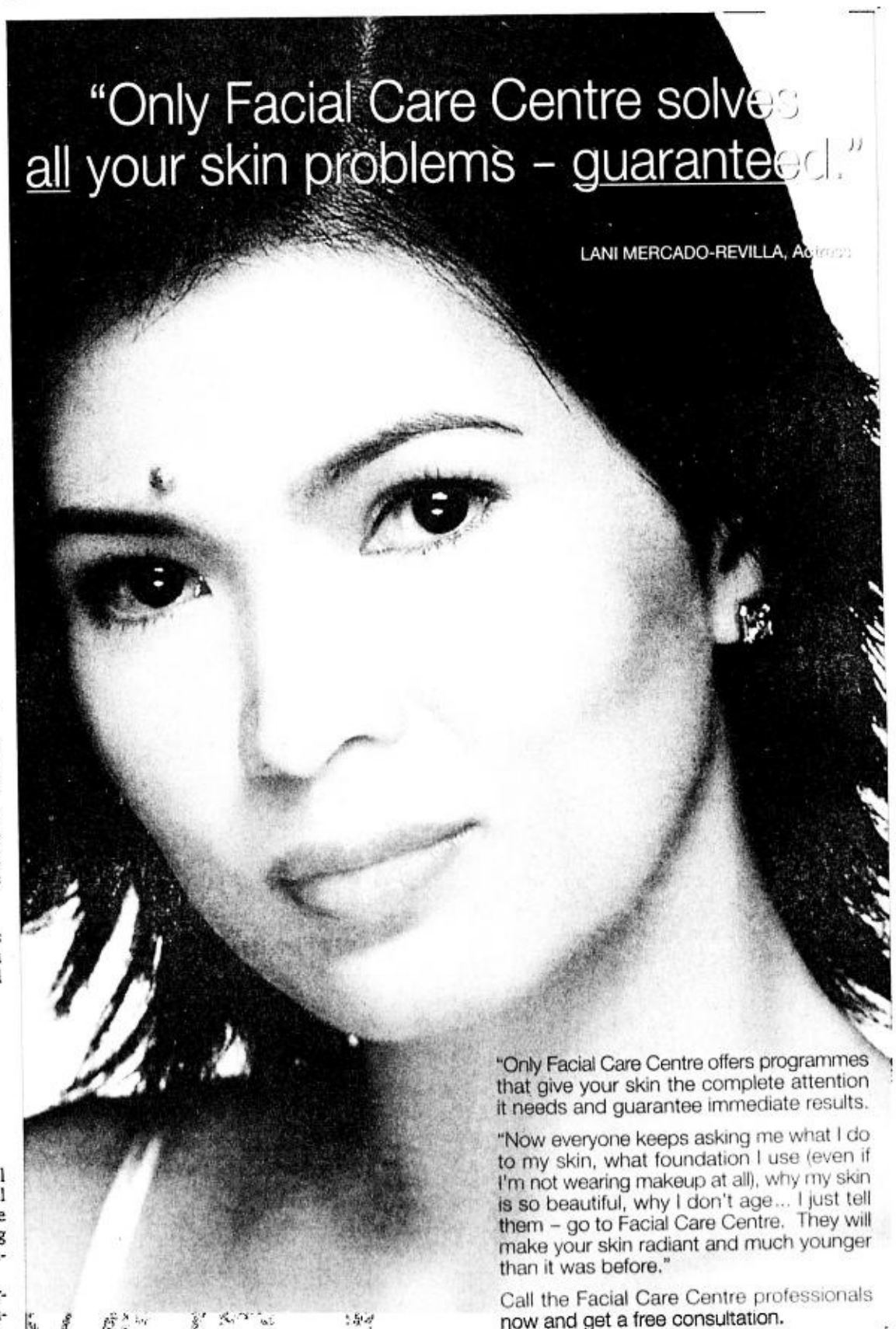

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Republic of the Philippines

COMMISSION ON ELECTIONS

Manila

CALENDAR OF ACTIVITIES AND PERIODS ON PROHIBITED ACTS IN CONNECTION WITH THE 16 APRIL 2005 PLEBISCITE TO RATIFY THE CREATION OF BARANGAY SAN ISIDRO OUT OF BARANGAY SAN ANTONIO IN TITAY ZAMBOANGA SIBUGAY PURSUANT TO PROVINCIAL ORDINANCE NO. 2002-122 DATED 07 AUGUST 2002.

ABALOS, Benjamin S. — Chairman
JAVIER, Rufino S.B., — Commissioner
SADAIN, Mehol K., — Commissioner
BORRA, Resurreccion Z., — Commissioner
TUASON, Florentino A., Jr., — Commissioner
GARCILLANO, Virgilio O., — Commissioner
BARCELONA, Manuel A., Jr., — Commissioner

Promulgated: 29 March 2005

RESOLUTION NO. 7455

Pursuant to the powers vested in it by the Constitution, the Omnibus Election Code, Republic Act Nos. 7160, and other election laws, the Commission on Elections has resolved to adopt, as it hereby adopts, the following Calendar of Activities and Periods on Prohibited Acts for the plebiscite to ratify the creation of Bgy. San Isidro out of Bgy. San Antonio in Titay, Zamboanga Sibugay on 16 April 2005 (Saturday).

DATE/PERIOD	PLEBISCITE ACTIVITIES	PROHIBITED ACTS COVERED/INVOLVED
April 7, 2005 (THU) to April 18, 2005 (MON)	PLEBISCITE PERIOD	1. Bearing, carrying or transporting firearms or other deadly weapons in public places, including any building, street, park, private vehicle or public conveyance, even if licensed to possess or carry the same, unless authorized in writing by the Commission (Sec. 261 (p) (q) (s) OEC as amended by Sec. 32 R.A. No. 7166; 2. Suspension of elective local officials (Sec. 261 (x) OEC); 3. Transfer of officers and employees in the Civil Service (Sec. 261 (h) OEC); 4. Organization or / maintenance of reaction forces, strike forces or other similar forces (Sec. 261) (u) OEC).
April 7, 2005 (THU) to April 15, 2005 (FRI)		1. Appointment or hiring of new employees. Sec. 261 (g) OEC); 2. Creation or filling up of new positions (Sec. 261 (g) OEC); 3. Promotions or giving of salary increases, remuneration or privilege. (Sec. 261 (g) OEC); 4. Construction of public works, delivery of materials for public works and issuance of treasury warrants or similar devices for a future undertaking chargeable against public funds. (Sec. 261 (w) OEC); 5. Releases, disbursements or expenditures of public works and social services and development. (Sec. 261 (v) OEC); 6. Appointment or use of special policemen, special/confidential agents or the like (Sec. 261 (m) OEC); 7. Use of armored land water or aircraft. (Sec. 261 (r) OEC); 8. Wearing of uniforms and bearing of arms. (Sec. 261 (s) OEC).
April 7, 2005 (THU) to April 14, 2005 (THU)	CAMPAIGN PERIOD	
April 7, 2005 (THU)	Submission to Comelec of complete list of all special policemen, special/ confidential agents or persons performing similar functions in the employ of barangay chairman, municipal mayor or any appointing authority.	
April 11, 2005 (MON)	Last day for appointment of members of Plebiscite Committees	
April 11, 2005 (MON) to April 16, 2005 (SAT)	Posting of the List of Voters as of May 10, 2004	
April 15, 2005 (FRI)	Inspection of Polling Places	1. Liquor Ban 2. Campaigning Apni 15, 2005 (FRI) 12:01 MN to April 16, 2005 (SAT) 12:00 MN
April 16, 2005 (SAT)	PLEBISCITE DAY Convening of the Board of Canvassers	1. Campaigning 2. Cockfighting and other forms of gambling holding fairs, boxing and/or any other similar sports. (Sec 261 (dd) OEC 3. Selling, furnishing, offering, buying, serving or taking intoxicating liquor, etc. (Sec. 261 (dd), (1), OEC). 4. Giving, accepting free transportation, food drinks and things of value (Sec. 89, OEC). 5. Opening of booths or stalls for the sale of merchandise, refreshment, etc. within 30 meters radius from polling place (Sec. 261 (dd) (2) OEC)
April 18, 2005 (MON)	LAST DAY OF PLEBISCITE PERIOD	

Let this Resolution be published by the Education and Information Department (EID) in one (1) newspaper of general circulation and copies thereof be furnished the Offices of the Regional Election Director of Region IX, the Provincial Election Supervisor of Zamboanga Sibugay, the Election Officer of Titay, the Secretary of the Department of The Interior and Local Government, the Governor of Zamboanga Sibugay, the Mayor of Titay, and the Directors/Heads of deputized government agencies in Region IX and in the Province of Zamboanga Sibugay.

The Deputy Executive Director for Operations, assisted by the Directors of the Education and Information Department and the Election and Barangay Affairs Department shall implement this Resolution.

This Resolution shall take effect upon its promulgation

SO ORDERED.

BENJAMIN S. ABALOS
Chairman

RUFINO S.B. JAVIER
Commissioner

MEHOL K. SADAIN
Commissioner

RESURRECCION Z. BORRA
Commissioner

FLORENTINO A. TUASON, Jr.
Commissioner

VIRGILIO O. GARCILLANO
Commissioner

MANUEL A. BARCELONA, Jr.
Commissioner

(PDI–March 31, 2005)

Trouble in Cavite's fairways

Golf clubs see face stymie in new taxes on water, trees, plants

By Jong Arcano
Inquirer Golf Monthly

WHILE still trying to figure out how to deal with the looming El Niño weather that threatens to sear their fairways and greens, the golf clubs of Cavite province are contending with an even bigger, potentially more deadly storm called "El Gobierno."

The Cavite provincial government has introduced a spate of new taxes, called the golfer's environmental fees, that targets not just the players but also the clubs' use of ground water and their cultivation of trees and plants.

The provincial council recently approved an ordinance containing a revised revenue code that the clubs believe would not just affect their operations but threaten their very existence.

"While golf clubs are already struggling to shoulder the high maintenance cost running in millions every month, taxing them for groundwater used will be a very heavy burden which might take its toll on their operations," said Ogie Manalo, president of the Federation of Golf Clubs Philippines.

The new ordinance requires all golfers playing in any of the courses owned by six golf clubs in Cavite a fee of P20 for each round. It covers all players, whether they are members or guests, local or foreign.

The ordinance also proposes to tax clubs using deep wells as a source of water to irrigate and maintain their greens. Most, if not all, of the golf courses rely on underground water for their upkeep.

Under the approved scheme, the clubs are required to install a metering device to monitor the actual amount of water pumped into their reservoirs, for which they will be charged accordingly.

Additionally, each club would be assessed according to the actual value of every tree or plant in its premises. The clubs' management said this meant that they would have to pay more for every inch that a tree or plant grows every day.

Failure to comply would mean fines or the arrest of the club owners and managers.

The golf clubs in Cavite include the Manila Southwoods in Carmona, Orchard in Dasmariñas, Riviera in Silang, Eagle Ridge in Gen. Trias, Sherwood Hills in Trece Martires, Puerto Azul in Ternate, Royale Tagaytay in Alfonso and Tagaytay Highlands.

As soon as the implementation of the ordinance was ordered two weeks ago, collectors and agents from the Cavite government began visiting the courses with their log books. But so far, none of the affected clubs have paid as they intend to appeal to the provincial government.

The FGCPI said it would fight the ordinance and would take the issue to the courts if necessary.

"This is a serious matter that we may have to fight together because what Cavite might be doing now can be done to Laguna tomorrow, then Tagaytay the next day and Cebu next week," Manalo said.

"While the P20 levy is but a fraction of what a golfer actually spends, this might be a bad precedent that will escalate in the coming days and months until it becomes so expensive that it will force these clubs to close shop," he said.

Initial estimates indicate that the new taxes would translate to additional costs of some P15 to P20 million a year for each club. The water bill alone would run into the millions.

The Cavite clubs claim that the local government has no jurisdiction over water as "it's the water district that should be raising this issue."

They also argue that they are supporting the local economy by bringing in tourists and providing employment to thousands of residents. Each club employs an average of a hundred rank-and-file employees and about 500 caddies.

Vice Gov. Johnvic Remulla, who chairs the provincial council, dismissed the golf clubs' complaint.

"I think the price is just fair," Remulla said in a phone interview.

He said the golf clubs' claim that the new taxes could lead to their closure was "extreme."

Remulla said the provincial government consulted over the past three years with several the golf clubs' management and with the National Golfers Association of the Philippines (NGAP).

He said the new taxes were aimed at raising funds for the provincial government's environmental projects like protecting water resources.

Remulla said the golf courses had been using water for years without paying a single centavo.

"This tax is not regressive. We are imposing [taxes on] the use of water which is a community resource. As a government entity, we have custody of any water resources in the province," he said, adding that he was not aware that the government was charging the clubs for every tree in their premises.

He said the provincial council would be willing to hear what the golf clubs have to say its sessions resume in May. ***With a report from Marlon Ramos, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau***

Imee: Oops, wrong Hyatt

By Philip C. Tubeza

ILOCOS Norte Rep. Imee Marcos yesterday clarified that the Hyatt hotel now owned by an alleged associate of Macau casino mogul Stanley Ho was the Hyatt Hotel and Casino Manila along Pedro Gil Street in Manila and not the Hyatt Regency Hotel along Roxas Boulevard in Pasay City. Hyatt Regency also clarified the matter, saying that the 37-year-old five-star hotel has hosted celebrities, royalty, heads of state, and tycoons, whose presence "lent further credence to its reputation as one of the leading 5-star deluxe establishments in the metropolis."

SC denies Noli motion

By Armand N. Nocum

A DAY after throwing out the election protest filed by the late Fernando Poe Jr. and the petition of his wife—Susan Roces- to substitute him, the Supreme Court yesterday ruled to proceed with the hearing of the election protest filed by Poe's running mate Loren Legarda against her rival in the vice presidential race.

Sitting as a Presidential Electoral Tribunal (PET), the SC "denied with finality" the motion for reconsideration filed by Vice President Noli de Castro, declaring that the election protest filed by Legarda was valid and should be heard.

"The protest here is sufficient in form and substantively, serious enough on its face to pose a challenge to protestee's title to his office. In our view, the instant protest consists of alleged ultimate facts, not mere conclusions of law, that need to be proven in due time," the high court said in its resolution yesterday.

"Considering that we find the protest sufficient in form and substance, we must again stress that nothing as yet has been proved as to the veracity of the allegations. The protest is only sufficient for the (PET) to proceed and give the protestant the opportunity to prove her case," the court added.

The high court ordered Legarda to "specify within ten days from notice the three provinces best exemplifying the manifest errors alleged in the first part of her protest, and three provinces best exemplifying the frauds and irregularities alleged in the second part of her protest."

In a seven-page resolution penned by Associate Justice Leonardo A. Quisumbing, the high court denied for 'lack of merit" de Castro's position that the PET has no jurisdiction over the issue.

PLUNDER TRIAL

2 Muslim scholars take stand for Erap's defense

By Nelson F. Flores

MAKING good on their promise, defense lawyers of former President Joseph Estrada yesterday presented three more witnesses, including two scholars of the Erap Muslim Youth Foundation, at the resumption of the plunder trial of the detained president at the Sandiganbayan.

Defense counsel Cleofe Verzola presented two EMYF scholars Janice Negrosa and Roque Morales, who despite their Christian sounding names claimed to be believers of Islam, and former Public Attorneys Office chief and now EMYF executive Carina Demaisip.

Negrosa and Morales testified that they were EMYF scholars for the school year 2004-2005 and that they were reimbursed by the foundation for their school-related expenses.

Despite being presented at the witness stand, Demaisip, however, failed to testify for lack of time. She was scheduled to appear and testify on Monday.

Verzola, who promised Monday to present more witnesses, said the testimony of the witnesses is proof that the EMYF is not a bogus organization and although the foundation went into a hiatus during the early years of its formation, that unfortunate incident was due to circumstances beyond the foundation's control.

Verzola explained that the operation of the foundation, which was incorporated on Feb. 17, 2000, had been stymied by the medical operation that its chair, UP vice president Raul de Guzman, had to undergo in the United States and the resignation of its treasurer, banker George Go.

She also cited the arrest and incarceration of the foundation's corporate lawyer, Edward Serapio, who was accused of laundering the P200 million which *jueteng* operators had allegedly funneled into the foundation through Ilocos Sur Gov. Luis "Chavit" Singson.

She said that after De Guzman recovered from his surgery and Serapio was released, the EMYF resumed operations in 2004.

However, Special Prosecutor Dennis Villa Ignacio said the testimonies of the scholar witnesses were irrelevant since they are testifying on events that happened after the plunder charges were already filed.

Villa Ignacio also noted that contrary to the avowed principle of the EMYF to help poor Muslim youths, the scholars they presented in Court could not be classified as poor and underprivileged.

"One of their witnesses is even a member of the Muslim royalty while the rest are professionals who are employed and could even send their kin to school," Villa Ignacio said.

Villa Ignacio also noted that the scholars did not pass the proper screening, an indication "that the recent activities of the EMYF were just an after thought."

LAS VEGAS LUXURY SUITE

Palace takes up cudgels for Mike A

By Gil C. Cabacungan and Philip C. Tubeza

MALACAÑANG waded into the latest controversy involving First Gentleman Jose Miguel Arroyo with Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita saying people should first consider the circumstances surrounding Arroyo's stay in a luxury hotel suite in Las Vegas before passing judgment.

"I wish I do not have to comment on the personal disposition of anyone. It doesn't have to be the First Gentleman. I could have been me invited somewhere and people would make a story of it," Ermita said at a press briefing yesterday.

Ermita said he was reluctant to comment on the issue as he had no personal knowledge of Arroyo's alleged stay in the $20,000-a-night suite at the MGM Grand Hotel.

Arroyo felt alluded by a blind item in a March 23 column item by INQUIRER sports columnist Recah Trinidad which said that a "heavyweight backer" of Filipino boxer Manny Pacquiao had stayed in the $20,000 suite at the MGM Grand.

His representatives came out yesterday claiming that the room Arroyo had stayed in was given as complimentary accommodation and that it was not a luxurious suite.

House Minority Leader Francis Escudero on Monday called for a congressional investigation into the item reported in Trinidad's column to supposedly strengthen the laws against ostentatious display of wealth by public officials or their relatives.

Ermita was reluctant to answer when asked if he would have accepted an offer to to spend one night in a $20,000 suite for free.

"Personally, I am a man of simple tastes. I may not have accepted or I may have accepted it but it doesn't mean it was because of the price. I wouldn't even ask if it was a $20,000-a-night suite," Ermita said.

Compared to the wealthy Arroyo, Ermita said he was a "a promdi" (provincial) who can sleep even in a small room.

"Every occasion has different circumstances and we cannot be compared. Different people have different dispositions. I do not now the circumstances, I wish I would not have to comment," Ermita said.

Escudero yesterday wondered aloud why Arroyo's allies were rushing to his defense when the congressman said he never mentioned the First Gentleman by name.

But he said he was satisfied that Arroyo's camp had admitted to using the expensive MGM suite for free and was no longer interested in finding out the identity of the Filipino who allegedly rented the $20,000-a-night hotel suite.

"So, the answer was correct. I'm no longer interested in having him called. That is enough. They've already admitted to it," he said.

But Escudero said that anyone who was offered the luxury suite for free should have turned down the offer.

Isabela Rep. Anthony Miranda, the spokesperson of the administration Kampi party, said the controversy was a non-issue.

In a statement, Miranda said he was bewildered at the opposition's filing of a resolution for a probe into the incident since he said the columnist who wrote the item had clarified that no Filipino actually stayed in the $20,000-a-day suite.

Miranda decried the attempt to link the report to the First Gentleman who he said had been given the complimentary accommodation as a guest of the hotel.

The issue of conspicuous consumption did not apply as "absolutely no public funds" were involved, he said.

Bank told to reinstate 'whistle blower'

By Doris C. Dumlao

A LABOR arbitration branch has ruled in favor of a former high-ranking executive of Standard Chartered Bank who claimed he was illegally sacked after he complained against the British bank's sale of unregistered securities.

Labor Arbiter Pablo Espiritu Jr. of the National Labor Relations Commission-Quezon City, in a decision dated March 18, ordered SCB to reinstate Manuel Baviera to his former position as VP for HR Service Delivery and Industrial Relations without loss of seniority, rights privileges and benefits.

SCB was likewise ordered to pay Baviera a sum of P16.2 million, including full backwages and benefits worth P8.2 million from the time of his extended preventive suspension and subsequent dismissal up to the actual date of reinstatement and or finality.

The arbiter also awarded Baviera P5 million in moral damages and P3 million as exemplary damages, stating that SCB's claim of loss of confidence was "a mere afterthought and was without factual basis."

"Evidence reveals that the filing of charges against complainant was belatedly made by respondents after the complainant exposed the bank's alleged illegal sale of unregistered Global Third Party Mutual Funds," the ruling said.

Mutual funds

While he was an employee of SCB, Baviera likewise invested in these mutual funds, now the subject of an ongoing investigation by the Senate committee on banks following a privilege speech delivered by committee vice chair Juan Ponce Enrile.

Instead of SCB investigating his complaint as a wronged bank customer, the arbiter said complainant was administratively charged for alleged misuse of confidential information and documents concerning operations or trade secrets of the bank to third parties and allegedly for violating the data privacy rule of the bank's code of ethics.

It added that complainant further got the ire of SCB officials in the Philippines when he informed SCB officers based in Singapore and the UK on June 3, 2003 of the illegal acts committed by its local branch.

"Thus it was complainant who found himself charged although for acts pertaining to the pursuit of his complaint as a bank customer or client and not for his work performance as a bank employee," the ruling said.

The arbiter said evidence had proven that complainant was dismissed from employment when he filed labor, administrative and criminal cases against the bank in various government agencies.

Sale of securities

"Respondents should not shift the blame on the complainant for their illegal activities in selling securities without the necessary permit by the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas and Securities and Exchange Commission.

"Being an officer of the bank, complainant is also duty bound to inform the serious ramification of unauthorized selling of securities which will eventually redound against the bank. Complainant's duty of subordination is not only to the bank but also to the clients of the bank in general since they rely on the bank to provide them adequate and sound financial advise and services," it added.

The arbiter said SCB and its top officials led by country manager Simon Morris failed to present clear and substantial evidence to support their contention that dismissal was justified based on the doctrine of loss of confidence.

The arbitration branch also said it had taken judicial notice on the findings of the SEC in its cease and desist order dated Dec. 4, 2003 for SCB to immediately stop selling securities to the public. While respondents claimed in a succeeding motion that the CDO was not yet permanent, it also noted that SCB had already paid SEC P7 million as administrative settlement.

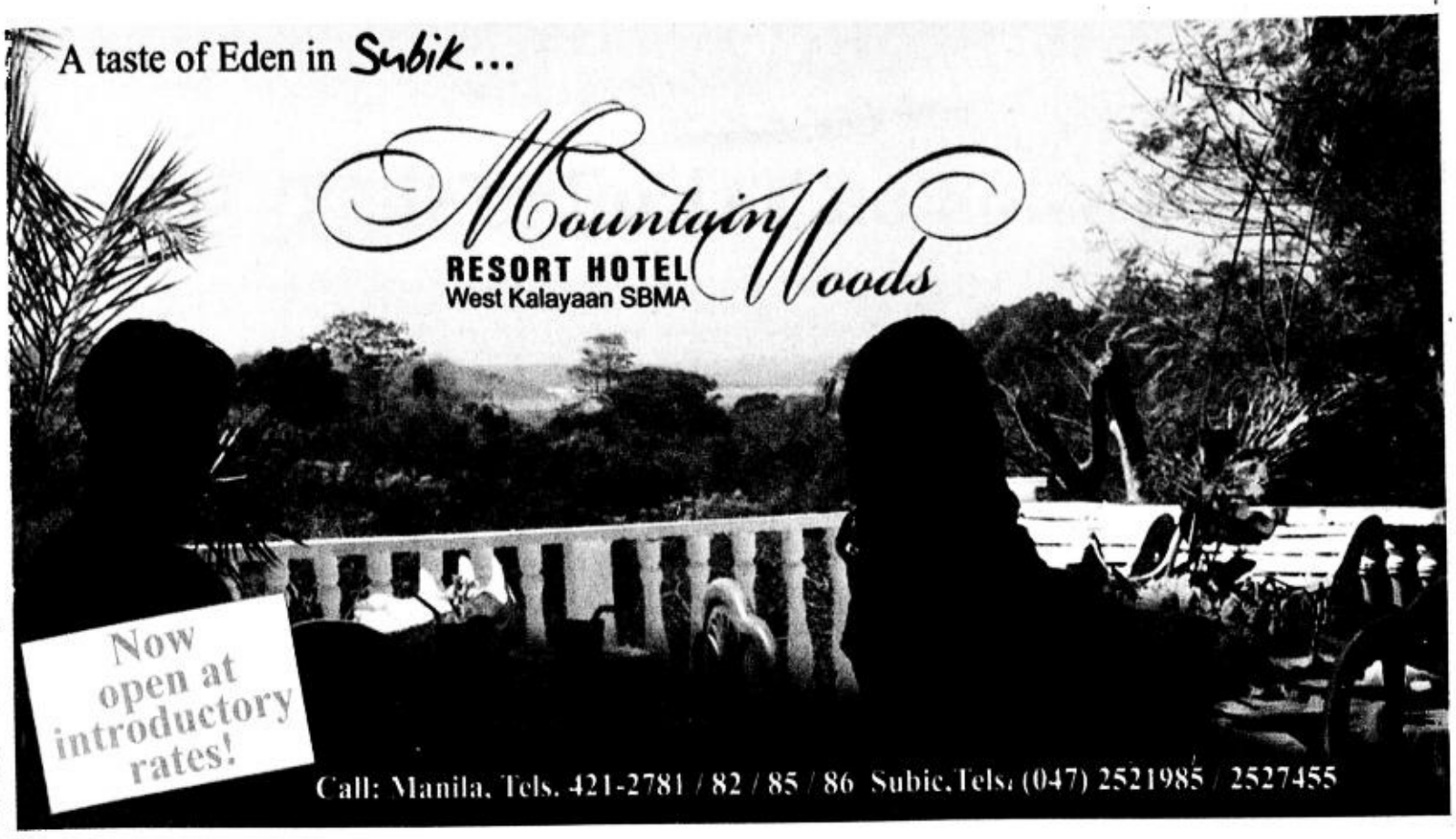
Deliberate dismissal

"The claim for moral and exemplary damages should likewise be granted in light of the evident bad faith, the gross and wanton manner by which complainant was deliberately dismissed by his employer," the arbiter said.

"SCB's retaliatory act of terminating the employment of complainant without factual basis was done in bad faith, after complainant refused to be intimidated and accept the settlement offer of P5.5 million by the bank. There is merit in complainant's claim that ever since he spoke of the illegal investment activities of the bank, respondent bank, through its CEO Simon Morris made life difficult for the complainant," the ruling stressed.

Baviera's legal counsel Frank Chavez, in a press statement, said: "Baviera has been portrayed by the media spin doctors of SCB as an extortionist. This labor case shows that there is actual legal basis for his claim and that Mr. Baviera is not an extortionist."

Sources from SCB said the British bank would appeal the arbiter's ruling. The next recourse is at the NLRC Commission level and at the Court of Appeals.



Special session on VAT off to shaky start over quorum

From page A1

muster the requisite quorum.

With 14 of the 23 senators present, the Senate had a quorum when the special session opened before 4 p.m. but had to suspend its session after Sen. Joker Arroyo questioned the basis for the Senate proceedings without notification of a quorum from the other chamber.

Only about 50 lawmakers turned up at the Batasang Pambansa (the 236-member House needs 119 to have a quorum) at 4 p.m.

Acting as speaker, House Deputy Speaker for Luzon Benigno Aquino III, suspended the session on his own initiative right after the singing of the national anthem to prevent House Minority Leader Francis Escudero and Party-list Rep. Joel Villanueva from questioning the quorum.

Two hours later, the House resumed session, conducted a roll call and found that the attendance list had grown to 134. The Senate cannot proceed with any session unless the House has a quorum.

"We have already done our duty, we have approved the two VAT bills. We are now waiting for the Senate to approve it so we can go into (bicamerical) conference," said Speaker Jose de Venecia when he faced the media to explain the initial failure of the House to have a quorum.

At 5:55 p.m., after some senators huddled in the Senate lounge with Presidential Legislative Adviser Gabriel Claudio the session was resumed.

Present were Senate President Franklin Drilon, Majority Leader Francis Pangilinan, Miriam Defensor-Santiago, Richard Gordon, Arroyo, Rodolfo Biazon, Ralph Recto, Juan Flavier and opposition Senators Aquilino Pimentel Jr., Edgardo Angara, Jamby Madrigal and Juan Ponce Enrile. Opposition Sen. Serge Osmeña arrived later.

Osmeña took the floor and resumed his interpellation of Recto, chair of the Senate ways and means committee.

Santiago vs Senate version

In the meantime, Santiago took a view contrary to the pending Senate ways and means committee report, which retains the present VAT rate of 10 percent and lifts the exemptions of power and petroleum products and 10 other sectors.

Santiago batted for a 2-percentage point increase in the rate to 12 percent and the exemption of power and petroleum products from VAT.

Santiago said she was convinced that the House version of the VAT reform measure, which calls for increasing the VAT rate to 12 percent, was superior to the version reported out by the Senate ways and means committee.

Recto earlier said the senators were "almost unanimous" in not increasing the VAT and Senate President Franklin Drilon said this position would be approved in the chamber.

Arroyo predicted no senator would dare stand up to propose an amendment to Recto's report to raise the rate to 12 percent.

But Santiago sought to deliver a privilege speech yesterday saying: "I respectfully take the position that the VAT should be increased from 10 to 12 percent, except for power and petroleum, on which the increase should be postponed to a more appropriate time."

She said she would try to propose this as an amendment to Recto's report but Recto said he would not accept it. Santiago, Madrigal and Osmeña are the remaining senators scheduled to interpellate Recto on his report.

"Yes, I will try and amend the Senate version but if I am outvoted still I will make it of record that this is my world view on the VAT and... if I'm not able to convince today the ways and means committee I might at least be able to convince the Senate panel to the bicam," she said.

The bicameral conference committee is formed to reconcile the versions of the two chambers.

"It is likely that the House version will prevail at the bicam," Santiago said.

Tooth and nail

She expects the House to "fight tooth and nail" for its version during the bicam since the congressmen, she said, were convinced that theirs was more pro-consumer than the Senate's.

"I know that the House is gearing for battle; as far as they're concerned it's either they return with their shields or they're on top of it," Santiago said.

She believed that most of the administration senators were in favor of a higher VAT rate.

Sen. Mar Roxas said he did not think the Recto version presented a revenue measure that was credible enough but he stopped short of saying he would go for a rate of 12 percent.

"I am for a credible revenue measure. I don't think the Senate version is credible enough," Roxas said in an interview.

In her speech, Santiago said the Senate version could not possibly raise the projected revenues because it lifted 12 exemptions but added certain exemptions.

"If we are going to raise revenues, let's do it and bite the bullet, but we should not be discriminatory? For instance, why should we exempt cabarets and nightclubs from the amusement tax?" Santiago said.

2007 elections

She said she would strongly oppose a VAT on electricity and petroleum products, adding that a VAT on these socially sensitive products should be postponed for three to five years.

She warned that imposing VAT on power and fuel could spur street protests.

It could also ruin the administration's chances in the 2007 senatorial elections, she said.

Recto, whose first Senate term ends in 2007, is expected to run for reelection that year.

Santiago criticized Recto's report as confusing. "As it is presently worded the title does not give proper notice to the reader on what it is about. It simply says 'amending certain sections.' There are about 20 sections of the internal revenue code, so that's very poor craftsmanship," she said.

FPJ camp hits court ruling: They blew it

From page A1

"And this should not be thought of as another destabilization attempt [against the administration]. On the contrary, this would show that our democracy is alive," he said, adding:

"Unity does not mean always saying, 'Yes, Ma'am.'"

Easter, birthday gift

In Malacañang, Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita told reporters of President Macapagal-Arroyo's relief over the PET decision to dismiss Poe's election protest.

"This is an Easter gift and birthday gift even if you are confident that there is no question of your victory," Ermita said at a briefing. "This is a big deal [in the sense] that even if it does not hurt too much, we're better off without it. Having a PET case is like having a thorn on your neck."

Ermita said it was but "normal" for the President to be elated: "There is no reason why we should not celebrate. We are happy that we have something that has been taken out of the way, especially by the Supreme Court."

But he said Ms Arroyo's elation should not be misconstrued as her lack of confidence in winning the case.

Ermita downplayed insinuations that the PET decision was a big break for the President, who was reportedly "afraid" of being pitted against Poe's widow.

"Oh, [she is] definitely not [afraid of running against Roces] of all people. I don't see why we should use the term 'afraid' when there was nothing to worry about, really. It's a nonissue," he said.

Ermita refused to discuss allegations that Malacañang had cheated in the election. "The Supreme Court has spoken, let us move forward," he said. "Let us put that aside. We don't have to talk about things in the past, it will only rake up things that we don't want to hear anymore."

Give it a rest

Ermita also cautioned Poe loyalists against launching street protests to denounce the PET decision.

"As Filipinos, we should put the issue to rest because we are a government of laws and there are mechanisms, laws, that need to be followed, especially on... contesting election results. I hope that our fellow Filipinos will be patriotic enough to see our justice system is working," he said.

As standard operating procedure, the police have been instructed to beef up security in the coming weeks, Ermita said. He cited the arrival of 1,500 delegates for the Inter Parliamentary Union assembly in Manila on April 11-12 as a special focus of the security measures.

"Some people might just take advantage of the situation, and we have to be sure security forces would be on their toes," he said.

Exhausting legal means

Echoing the statement of Roces' lawyer Sixto Brillantes that he would file a motion for reconsideration within the prescribed 15 days, Escudero said the opposition would "exhaust all legal means."

He said the opposition would argue that there was still time for somebody else to substitute for Poe if the court insists that Roces is not qualified to do so.

The PET had ruled that Roces was not qualified to substitute for her husband and that, since no qualified substitute came forward within the 30-day prescribed period after Poe's death last Dec. 14, his election protest should also be dismissed.

ESCUDERO: High court missed opportunity to legally settle all doubts on the May 2004 presidential election.

But Escudero said Roces filed her motion three days before that period expired.

He added: "My opinion is that the 30-period should have stopped running because it was still not known if Susan could substitute for her husband.

"Now that we know that she can't, and assuming that it becomes final from the time that she receives a copy of the ruling, we should have three more days to file a substitute who would conform with their ruling."

Lawyers' opinions

Administration Sen. Miriam Defensor-Santiago, a former trial court judge and law professor, expressed doubt that Roces and her lawyers could overturn the PET decision, which she described as "indubitably correct."

"This is an invaluable ruling," Santiago said. "I don't think there's a Chinaman's chance that they will ever obtain a reconsideration of the ruling."

Opposition Sen. Juan Ponce Enrile, also a lawyer, told reporters: "It's legally correct, although from the point of view of the opposition it would have been better if the matter was allowed to go to process. If the protestant dies, nobody else can substitute for him."

Asked if Roces was ill-advised in filing the petition, Enrile said: "It's not a tested area... Now the Supreme Court has spoken; it has interpreted the Constitution."

But Escudero said the PET should not have waited two months only to rule "in one blow" that Roces could not substitute for her husband and that his protest was dismissed.

"Unfair *naman yata yun*," he said. "If that's the case, they should have said so a day after she filed her motion. Their decision was simple. They just cited Section 14 of PET rules."

Escudero also took exception to the statement of Ms Arroyo's election lawyer Romulo Macalintal that the opposition should just "shut up" after the PET ruling: "We've heard that before—during the national canvassing. It's getting to be hard on the ear. I hope he would avoid issuing such statements.

"First of all, he is not our boss. We respect the views that he says and he should also respect ours."

'Carry on the fight'

The militant Bagong Alyansang Makabayan called on Roces to continue pushing the election protest.

Bayan secretary general Renato Reyes Jr. said the group wanted Roces to "carry on the fight."

"We stand with Mrs. Poe in the continuing search for truth. We too are interested in knowing the real outcome of the 2004 election," he said.

Reyes said that instead of clearing all questions over Ms Arroyo's electoral victory in 2004, the decision of the high court only served to magnify doubts.

"The credibility of the Arroyo presidency is now even more questionable," he said.

Bayan called on Roces not to give up the fight for truth and justice, and said: "The majority of Filipinos believe that Mrs. Arroyo engaged in electoral fraud in 2004. Surveys conducted after the May 2004 elections showed such results."

The group also said Poe's election protest was no longer just a legal issue but also a moral one.

"What is frightening for this regime is that the ballot boxes will be reopened and evidence of fraud will be revealed," Bayan said. "That is why they wanted the electoral protest nipped in the bud. They fear that a full-blown investigation will snowball into more protests against the regime."

Black Wednesday

Scores of Poe supporters gathered yesterday at their headquarters in Mandaluyong City to dramatize their dismay over the PET decision.

"We have declared it a Black Wednesday," Cortez said.

He said Poe supporters were wearing black because "FPJ is dead, the protest is dead, and therefore hope for the country is also dead." ***With reports from Fe Zamora, Gil Cabacungan Jr., Michael Lim Ubac, Norman Bordadora and TJ Burgonio***

10 exemplary women in politics, governance cited

From page A1

Visayan word *babayi* or woman.

The Women in Politics and Governance Program of the consortium highlights the need "for an effective strategy for women's political participation in local development and governance." It vows to intensify efforts to develop women political leaders who will seek elective posts at the local levels and who offer comprehensive platforms that are also gender sensitive.

To inspire

Jennifer Albano, executive director of the Institute of Politics and Governance, a BBGC member, said the citation should help inspire community-based women leaders "to aggressively seek power and position in government for more substantial intervention in participative democracy."

In her keynote address, Akbayan Rep. Risa Hontiveros-Baraquel said the number of women legislators is declining. Citing figures, she added that the hold of male politicians at the local level remains strong.

Naldoza was cited for "her unwavering dedication to civil service and to the struggles of public sector unions." She is the national chair of the Confederation of Independent Unions in the Public Sector.

Citations

Obena was awarded for her "consistency and persistence in the enforcement of gender and development (GAD) budget of local government units." She set up GAD councils in her town and is a staunch organizer of women's economic enterprises.

Magayanes was recognized for "her sterling commitment to community and women's organizations." She brings people's issues in local government. While evolving as a political leader she maintains her role as wife and mother.

Tensions in family

"My husband bought this dress I'm wearing," she proudly told the audience. "He chose the color and the style." The audience cheered her husband.

Francisca Morada was awarded "for breathing life to community organization and development, women and gender issues, agrarian and asset reform advocacies in the province of Aurora." Her involvements had caused tensions in the family, she said. How she wished they were present, she added.

Angelina Ludovice-Katoh was cited for her "steadfast commitment to women and community organizing and for genuine peace and development in Mindanao." She started as a trade union activist and later became a development worker in Basilan. Lack of funds did not daunt Katoh. She sold *buko* (young coconut) and other products to finance the projects of Acord, an NGO that she heads.

Mimietta Bagulaya was cited for breaking barriers in order to serve in the government. She became the first woman mayor of Tacloban City and later, vice governor of Leyte. Bayi described her as "a true trailblazer not only in the field of governance but also in the realm of the family."

OUTSTANDING women who received awards for their exemplary work are (from left) Leyte Vice Gov. Mimietta Bagulaya, (3rd from right) Akbayan Rep. Loretta Ann Rosales, Albay Kagawad Marlene Magayanes, PCGG Commissioner Haydee Yorac, Aurora Rural Dev't. Worker Francisca Morada, Public Sector Union Mercedita Naldoza, Bohol Sangguniang Bayan Member Doris Obena, and Basilan Org for Peace and Dev't. Angelina Ludovice-Katoh. Unable to attend were Budget Secretary Emilia Boncodin and Isabela Gov. Grace Padaca. MITCH MAURICIO

Grace Padaca

Gov. Grace Padaca was cited for her remarkable courage for ending the rule of a political dynasty in Isabela and for instituting reforms in the provincial government and local politics. Padaca's fight in last year's election was well covered by the media.

National figures

National figures were also among the awardees but they made an effort to take a backseat. Presidential Commission on Good Government chair Haydee Yorac said she had received so many awards but Bayi was special, she said, because it put her side by side with the women who worked very hard and were largely unrecognized.

Yorac was cited for "her track record in political and electoral reforms, the fight against graft and corruption, peace and search for truth and justice."

Akbayan Rep. Loretta Ann Rosales' consistency, vigor and progressive stance in the House of Representatives earned her the Bayi Citation. Rosales was an educator and human rights activist before she entered politics. She was also a political detainee during the Marcos dictatorship.

Incorruptible

For being "an incorruptible fiscal manager" Budget and Management Secretary Emilia Boncodin was given the Bayi Citation "for a career official with exceptional competence and dedication and for fiscal reforms." Boncodin is known for being incorruptible and for her simplicity and modesty while serving in a highly sensitive position.

The Bayi Citation covers political and electoral reforms, fight against graft and corruption, search for peace, truth and justice, human rights, local and national progressive legislation, fiscal reforms, gender mainstreaming, community development and genuine trade unionism in the public sector.

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Comparative Performance Ratings of President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo
June 2004 to March 2005/ Philippines
(Row Percent)

Demographic variables	Approved			Undecided			Disapprove		
	Jun 04	Oct 04	Mar 05	Jun 04	Oct 04	Mar 05	Jun 04	Oct 04	Mar 05
Total Philippines	55	41	38	22	25	27	22	34	34
NCR	42	31	23	28	28	32	30	41	44
Balance Luzon	53	38	34	23	25	31	23	37	34
Visayas	67	53	52	19	23	17	14	24	30
Mindanao	58	43	45	20	25	24	21	32	32
Class ABC	51	39	36	28	26	31	20	35	32
TOTAL D	56	39	38	23	27	27	21	34	35
D1 (owns res'l lot)	56	37	39	23	27	28	21	36	33
D2 (does not own res'l lot)	56	43	37	23	27	25	21	29	38
E	56	46	40	19	20	25	25	34	34

Most Urgent Personal Concerns
March 3-16, 2005, Philippines
(Multiple Response, up to 3 allowed, in percent)

	LOCATION					CLASS		
Personal Concern	RP	NCR	LUZ	VIZ	MIN	ABC	D	E
To avoid illnesses and stay healthy	52	57	54	51	45	61	54	44
To finish schooling/provide schooling for my children	46	33	46	57	46	34	44	55
To have a secure and well-paying job or source of income	43	52	49	33	35	36	42	47
At least to be able to have enough to eat everyday	29	19	32	31	29	17	31	28
To have my own house and lot	27	33	27	26	25	22	25	33
To avoid being a victim of any serious crime	27	25	25	28	31	40	27	24
To be able to have some savings	27	34	26	21	28	40	29	19
To be able to pay our debts	20	15	15	23	28	14	20	21
To avoid illegal drug pushers and users in our neighborhood	18	17	15	18	25	22	17	21
To go abroad either to work or migrate	10	16	9	11	7	13	11	7

SOURCE: PULSE ASIA INC.

VIPS AT CAMP ABUBAKAR. Once the headquarters of the MILF, Camp Abubakar is now the site of development projects such as the Warehouse and Solar Dryer Project in Barangay Central Langkong inside the camp in Maguindanao. The President listens to a briefing conducted by Noel Ruiz, program manager of the Livelihood Enhancement and Peace Program. Also present is US envoy Francis Ricciardone at left. MALACAÑANG PHOTO

GMA popularity plunges–survey

From page A1

"I don't think there is a sense of panic in Malacañang. Administering a nation is not a matter of popularity," said Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita at a briefing. "When an election is forthcoming it [survey] is very important. But we don't have to base policy or action on what a civilian survey agency would come up with."

The respondents gave the President a failing mark in 11 of the 14 national issues, with controlling inflation getting the lowest score of 20 percent.

"Inflation is the national concern that most urgently needs the immediate attention of the administration according to 45 percent of Filipinos," said Tabunda, who noted that inflation jumped to 8.4 percent as of February this year from 7 percent last October due to soaring prices of electricity, fuel and food.

The Arroyo administration also received weak ratings in the second and third biggest concerns of Filipinos—eradicating corruption (approval rating down to 23 percent from 32 percent in October) and peace and security (down to 31 percent from 44 percent in October).

Damaging reports

Tabunda cited two damaging reports on the pervasiveness of corruption in the country (one by the Political and Economic Risk Consultancy Ltd. and the other by the Asian Development Bank) for the government's poor rating in curbing corruption despite its much-hyped efforts.

Tabunda said fighting in Sulu and the Feb. 14 bombings contributed to the drop in government's rating in security issues.

Other top concerns of Filipinos are reducing poverty, economic recovery, low pay of workers and fighting criminality.

Worse off

On the quality of life, the survey showed that 45 percent of Filipinos expected to be worse off next year while an even bigger group (59 percent) saw tougher times ahead.

More than 60 percent felt that they were worse off now than a year ago and 69 percent thought that the national quality of life deteriorated over the past 12 months.

While the survey showed that majority of Filipinos remained pessimistic, Tabunda said there was less pessimism regarding the national situation compared to the October survey.

"Possible reasons for these changes may have been the favorable news regarding national economic performance last year and the strengthening of the peso in the first quarter of 2005," Tabunda said.

Staying healthy

The most urgent personal concerns of the respondents are avoiding illnesses and staying healthy (52 percent), followed by allowing their children to finish school or providing them education (46 percent), and having a secure and well-paying job or source of income (43 percent). *(See table 2)*

Twenty percent said having enough to eat every day was their most urgent personal concern.

Ten percent nationwide mentioned going abroad either to work or migrate. It was 16 percent in Metro Manila.

Ermita suggested that the survey results be seen in a broader perspective.

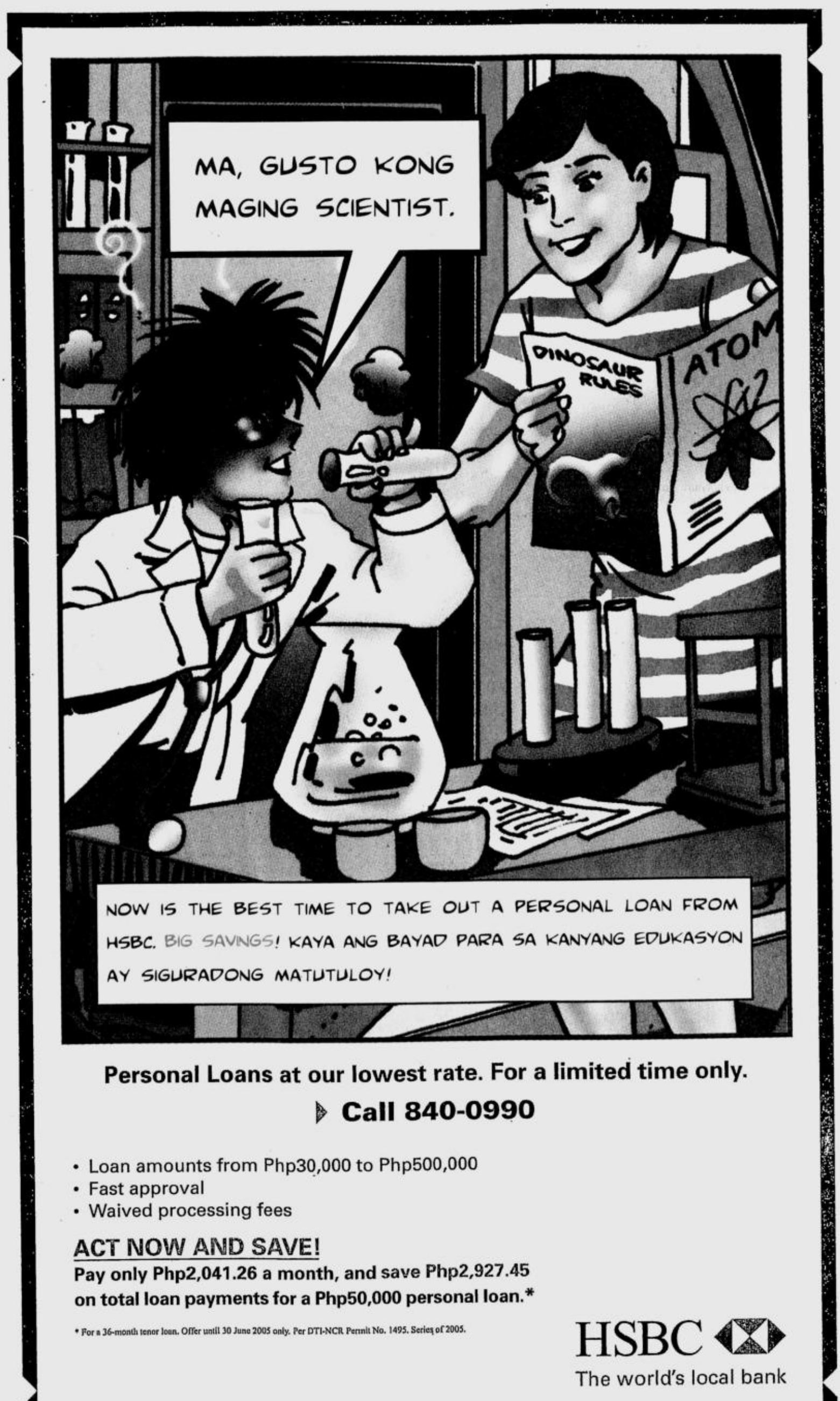
He said the country was better off now than the unstable days of the Aquino administration. "Those were the [days] when there was a sense of panic," Ermita said.

He noted that most Filipinos could not relate their personal needs to broader issues such as security concerns triggered by the Sept. 11, 2001 terrorist attacks.

Hope lies in VAT

Ermita said the government was pinning its hope on the approval of the value-added tax (VAT) reforms to reverse the slide in the President's ratings.

Asked how the VAT could improve the President's ratings when it could result in higher inflation, the respondents' main gripe, Ermita said: "The President is an economist, I'm sure she'll be able to manage this particular situation and confidence can be generated from the passage of the VAT law."



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Esperat kin to probers: Include national gov't execs

From page A1

cases she filed to see who has the strongest motive to kill her," said an elderly relative, noting that Esperat had filed about 15 cases against national and local officials of the Departments of Agriculture and of Agrarian Reform and the Office of the Ombudsman.

Police had said earlier that they were paring down the list of suspects to include a police colonel, a congressman and a businessman-contractor.

But Esperat's relatives said these people could just be fall guys.

"Although we are not imputing guilt on anybody, it is to the best interest of her family that all angles be looked into," said the elderly relative, who added that he would speak on record only when he gives his statement to the police.

A family friend of the Esperats, who had helped the journalist file criminal and administrative cases, said the latter had become afraid for her life about three weeks before she was killed.

The friend, who also requested anonymity, said it was then that Esperat phoned a relative and said: "You better get me out of the country. I fear for my life."

Ombudsman Simeon Marcelo yesterday ordered an update on all graft cases lodged by Esperat at his office.

Marcelo said he had no knowledge of the status of the cases because he normally did not interfere with the work of his preliminary investigators.

"I want [the investigators] to be free of any kind of pressure. Hence, the only time I become aware of the status of these cases is when their recommendations reach my desk for review and final decision," he said.

Smuggling case

Esperat had filed an election protest case against former Tacurong Rep. Lino Montilla.

In a complaint filed with the Office of the Ombudsman last August, she accused Surigao del Sur Rep. Prospero Pichay and Agriculture Undersecretary Cesar Drilon, a brother of Senate President Franklin Drilon, of allegedly smuggling in P23 million worth of chicken leg quarters from the United States.

Other respondents included former INQUIRER executive Samuel Señoren, a Maria Theresa Concepcion and six other DA officials and private individuals.

Esperat accused Drilon of allegedly allowing CSP International Commodities to import 10 vans containing 226.8 metric tons of chicken leg quarters in two shipments last year without the required veterinary quarantine clearance from the DA's Bureau of Animal Husbandry.

She said that the CSP stood for Concepcion, Señoren and Pichay, and that Pichay and Señoren were the "true owners" of CSP.

Charges denied

In a press statement, Pichay said he understood the concerns of the Esperat family. "As a former member of the media industry, I urge the authorities to get to the bottom of all these media killings," he said.

Señoren told the INQUIRER last night that he welcomed the investigation. "The case should be investigated in full so the real culprits behind the murder would be known," he said over the phone.

Señoren, a former INQUIRER business editor, said he had been dealt "a double whammy" by the case. First, when graft charges were filed against him and second, when his name was linked to the murder investigation.

He said the graft charges filed against him were unfair.

He also said that Pichay had divested from the company when he won a seat in Congress.

Drilon was not available for comment yesterday. But the three denied the charge in separate interviews with Ombudsman reporters last year.

Señoren had said the company, founded in 1996, had never been involved in any anomalous transaction. He claimed to have lost millions of pesos from the transaction because of government red tape and bureaucracy.

Drilon had said the deal was aboveboard, and raised optimism that they would be cleared by the Ombudsman.

Esperat had also filed a graft complaint against Agriculture Secretary Arthur Yap, former Agriculture Undersecretary Jocelyn Bolante and several others in relation to alleged irregularities in the P432-million fertilizer deal in 2003.

On Oct. 14, 2003, Esperat filed a complaint against Mindanao Deputy Ombudsman Antonio Valenzuela for his alleged bias toward DA officials facing graft charges in Central Mindanao.

Dangerous country

The Catholic Church yesterday continued to train the spotlight on the unsolved killings of journalists and activists, with Lingayen-Pangasinan Archbishop Oscar Cruz declaring that the Philippines had become a "dangerous country."

"There are bombings that kill innocent men, women and children. There are massacres that wipe out entire families. There are dead people found here and there. The danger signal is especially high and strong when media practitioners are killed," Cruz said in a statement.

Esperat, a 45-year-old columnist of the Midland Review, was shot dead on Maundy Thursday in her own house in Sultan Kudarat. She was the fourth journalist to be killed this year, and the 65th since the 1986 Edsa revolt that toppled Ferdinand Marcos' dictatorship.

"When one needs many numbers to count the media people killed and the counting goes on, the past deadly martial law regime comes to mind. Then and now, truth is definitely unwelcome. In fact, then and now, truth kills!" he said.

Earlier this week, the Catholic Bishop's Conference of the Philippines twice demanded that authorities unmask those behind the killing of three supporters of striking workers at Hacienda Luisita.

The three, including 68-year-old Victor Concepcion, a coordinator of the militant party-list group Anakpawis, were gunned down separately this month. The CBCP said the military appeared to have been behind the murders.

Show proof

Human rights groups had also accused the military of involvement in the murders, as well as in the killing of 17 other activists nationwide since the start of the year.

But Lt. Col. Buenaventura Pascual, AFP public information chief, yesterday said proof of the military's involvement should be shown.

"If they have a lead and they can pinpoint any personnel from the Armed Forces [who were involved in the killings], we would not tolerate that. We'll disclose their identities," Pascual said in reaction to the pastoral letter issued by Davao Archbishop Fernando Capalla on Tuesday.

The letter, which is being read in Masses this week, said in part that the killings of Concepcion, Tarlac City Councilor Adelardo Ladera and Fr. William Tadena of the Philippine Independent Church "call for immediate government investigation, especially since the military is suspected to author these assassinations."

In response, Pascual said: "It's hard to give an answer without sounding self-serving. If I say we did not do it, you would not believe us."

He said he could not think of any "motivation" on the part of the military to go after activists.

"Our soldiers are afraid of doing those things because they know they could go to jail," he said.

'We're not Superman'

Chief Supt. Rowland Albano, Central Luzon police director, aired a call for more patience from the CBCP.

"We're doing our best but it appears that our best is not yet good enough. We're not Superman, but we are really working hard to solve the killing [of the three supporters of the striking workers," Albano told the INQUIRER yesterday. He was to pay a courtesy call on Archbishop Paciano Aniceto of the Ecclesiastical Province of San Fernando to discuss updates on the investigation and explain the supposed predicament of the police.

Albano admitted that while the police had "good leads," he and his men had yet to gain momentum in the triple investigations.

"Even if your policemen are quick in their response, they can't do much without enough evidence and available witnesses," he said.

He also said three police task forces were separately working on the cases.

Aniceto, a member of the CBCP team mediating the Hacienda Luisita conflict, issued Monday a pastoral statement, urging the government to show results in the investigation soon.

Albano said investigators were looking into the possible involvement of the New People's Army.

"It appears that it's the communist terrorists that did it because they had already been outshone by the victims," he claimed without elaborating.

Albano said it would be better if the public waited for the official result of the investigation.

In the meantime, he said, elaborate security measures including checkpoints and "intensified intelligence gathering" had been put in place throughout Central Luzon to prevent another assassination.

"I also have a standing order that if something happens in an area and the chief of police is not there, he will automatically be sacked," he added. *With reports from Dona Z. Pazzibugan and Philip C. Tubeza*

Fishy tale: So, what's the smallest?

From page A1

The Guinness Book of World Records cites the dwarf pygmy goby, one of the endangered 800 species in the *Gobiidae* family, as the smallest fish in the world. Its discoverer, Dr. Albert W. Herre, former curator of fishes in Stanford University, said the fish measured only about 9 mm, or 10 mm shorter than the Formosa or mosquito fish.

In 1902, a smaller fish called "*siniarapan*" was accidentally found by Dr. Hugh M. Smith, a zoologist, in Lake Buhi. It was only 7-8 mm long.

Last year, Australian scientists claimed that the stout infantfish, which is found in the Great Barrier Reef, is the smallest fish in the world.

But people in this town in the third district of Albay will simply not agree. "*Tabios*," they contend, is only 5-6 mm long.

Accidental find

Salire was director of the Bicol University's Research and Extension Services when he accidentally discovered "*tabios*" on Sept. 15, 1988.

Before he died in 2000, Salire, a graduate of the BU College of Agriculture and Fisheries and environmentalist, stated in his "unpopular research" that it would really take time for the people, not only in Bicol but also all throughout the country and the world, to realize that "*tabios*" in Danao Lake was the world's smallest fish.

A non-scientist, Salire had been criticized and branded as a "pretender" for his claim. Some people speculated that what he caught was a day-old fry of "*sinarapan*."

Research and extension personnel of the BU consider "*tabios*" as belonging to the same *Gobiidae* family of "*sinarapan*" but smaller in size.

Buyers of "*tabios*" in the public markets of Polangui and Camarines Sur and several foreign explorers back Salire's contention by comparing actual measurements of fish caught in Lake Buhi and in Danao Lake.

Mountain lake

Covering 15 hectares, Danao Lake is an inland body of water atop an unnamed mountain surrounded by three bigger mountains—Masaraga, Malinao and the famous Mayon Volcano. It is situated between Barangays Quinarabasahan in Malinao, Albay and Barangay Maypiña in Polangui.

The place, 20 km from the town proper and 58 km from the capital city of Legazpi, offers a panoramic view of the towns and valleys bordering Albay and Camarines Sur.

Aphrodisiac

Polangui's late municipal secretary, Tom Rosales, had claimed that "tabios" had been proven by many consumers to be an effective aphrodisiac.

"This is aside from the fact that the fish is the most delicious and tastiest *kilawin*—raw fish mixed with vinegar, onions, garlic and calamansi," he said.

An unidentified searcher of the Australian Museum has collected a specimen of the fish, but little is known about its biology.

"Some fishermen and those who frequently buy *tabios* and habitually eat it have told me that they become hot when they eat the fish. It gives them a different kind of feeling and urge after eating the *tabios*. Maybe that could be another factor why some buy it," said Rosales.

"It's also a good appetizer during drinking sessions."

Good appetize

The fish is sold in the market at about P70 per kilo, but the price could reach P120 to P160 in other provinces of Bicol, residents said.

Finally, parents . . .

From page A1

without comment on Schiavo's 12th day without nourishment. Last week, the same 12-judge bench twice ruled against Schiavo's parents, Bob and Mary Schindler, who are trying to keep her alive.

Schiavo's feeding tube was removed March 18 on a court order sought by the woman's husband and legal guardian, Michael Schiavo, who has contended his wife wouldn't want to be kept alive artificially.

The chances of a court order in favor of the Schindlers remain unclear, turning a seven-year legal feud between the woman's parents and her husband into a highly politicized national drama over a person's right to die.

Uniting Americans

The case, which has dominated news coverage inside and outside the United States the past three weeks, has had the unexpected effect of uniting most Americans, whether Republicans or Democrats, around a consensus that the government should stay out of families' life and death decisions. *(See related story in The World, Page A10.)*

In seeking a new hearing late Tuesday, attorneys for Schiavo's parents argued that the District Court "committed plain error when it reviewed only the state court case and outcome history."

Now, the court will consider the request for a new hearing based on the facts of the case, rather than whether previous Florida court rulings have met legal standards under state law.

Urgency

There was no time frame for the court to consider the motion, but the Schindlers' attorneys asked to have the tube reinserted immediately "in light of the magnitude of what is at stake and the urgency of the action required."

The ruling was an unexpected victory for the Schindlers, whose appeals have been repeatedly rejected in state and federal courts.

State courts have ruled that Terri Schiavo has been in a persistent vegetative state since cardiac arrest starved her brain of oxygen 15 years ago. The same courts have accepted testimony from Michael Schiavo and others that she would not want to be kept alive artificially.

Death in 2 weeks

Doctors have said Terri Schiavo, 41, would probably die within a week or two upon removal of the tube. She suffered catastrophic brain damage in 1990 when her heart stopped for several minutes because of a chemical imbalance apparently brought on by an eating disorder.

Bob Schindler described his daughter as "failing" following his visit on Tuesday.

"She still looks pretty darn good under the circumstances," Schindler said. "You can see the impact of no food and water for 12 days. Her bodily functions are still working. We still have her."

Federal courts were given jurisdiction to review Schiavo's case after Republicans in Congress pushed through unprecedented emergency legislation aimed at prolonging Schiavo's life. But federal courts at two levels rebuffed the family.

Anita Fanshaw, 43, one of about 10 protesters outside Schiavo's hospice in Pinellas Park, Florida, praised Wednesday's court decision.

"God has a way of making things work," she said.

Attorneys for the Schindlers and Schiavo's husband didn't immediately return phone messages early Wednesday.

On Tuesday, the Rev. Jesse Jackson prayed with the Schindlers and joined conservatives in calling for state lawmakers to order her feeding tube reinserted.

The former Democratic presidential candidate was invited by Schiavo's parents to meet with activists outside Schiavo's hospice. His arrival was greeted by some applause and cries of "This is about civil rights!"

"I feel so passionate about this injustice being done, how unnecessary it is to deny her a feeding tube, water, not even ice to be used for her parched lips," he said. "This is a moral issue and it transcends politics and family disputes."

Appeal to husband

Mary Schindler later made a terse but emotional appeal to Michael Schiavo: "Michael and Jodi, you have your own children. Please, please give my child back to me." Michael Schiavo and fiancee Jodi Centonze have two children, born long after Terri Schiavo's collapse.

Although supporters of the Schindlers have claimed the dehydrated woman is being denied comfort measures such as ice chips for her dry mouth or balm for chapped lips, George Felos, the husband's attorney, defended how Schiavo was being cared for.

"Obviously, the parents and the siblings are desperate. Desperation may lead to different perceptions," Felos told CNN. "I can only tell you what I've seen, and Terri is dying a very peaceful, cared-for death."

Jackson said Michael Schiavo had rejected his request to see the brain-damaged woman. The influential Democrat also telephoned black legislators in a last-ditch effort to bring back a bill that would prohibit severely brain-damaged patients from being denied food and water if they didn't express their wishes in writing. Lawmakers rejected the legislation earlier this month and appeared unlikely to reconsider it. *Reports by AP and Reuters*

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2 party-list solons start fast to protest killing of militants

By Philip C. Tubeza

TWO PARTY-LIST lawmakers have embarked on a three-day fast to force President Macapagal-Arroyo and the House of Representatives to immediately move to stop the continued killing of militant activists.

Anakpawis Representatives Rafael Mariano and Crispin Beltran and five other activists began the fast yesterday morning outside the Batasan gate of the House, also to call the attention of the delegates to the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) assembly to the plight of leftist groups in the country.

"When will we act? When even the representatives of Anakpawis and other progressive groups in Congress also fall victim to liquidation and extrajudicial killings?" Mariano said.

He said the three-day fast would become a hunger strike if no "substantial" response would be elicited from the House leadership and Malacañang.

The others taking part in the fast are Willy Marbella, spokesperson of the Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas, Pamalakaya chair Fernando Hicap, woman peasant leader Carmen Buena, Central Azucarera de Tarlac Labor Union spokesperson Rene Tua and United Luisita Workers' Union adviser Rodel Mesa.

Dressed in white shirts marked with the words "Stop Killing Activists," they have set up a tent and are limiting themselves to water and crackers for sustenance.

Mariano said that since the beginning of the year, 32 members and supporters of militant groups and people's organizations had been killed, and five activists had become victims of involuntary disappearance.

He said they adjusted the number of those killed from the previous 18 after including "peasant supporters" of militant groups.

According to Mariano, the evidence and testimony that they gathered show that the killers were either members of the military and the police or "their so-called death squads."

"We hope the [IPU] takes on this issue," he said. "This is not to shame the Congress of the Philippines, but we hope the killings would be noticed because we know many of the delegates are also advocates of human rights, civil liberties, and rights of workers and farmers."

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THURSDAY, MARCH 31, 2005

The WORLD

Editor Luverne B. Gueco

Syria to withdraw all troops before election

UNITED NATIONS—Syria said for the first time on Tuesday that it would withdraw all its military and intelligence forces from Lebanon before elections due to be held there in May.

Foreign Minister Farouq al-Shara made the pledge in a letter to UN Secretary General Kofi Annan dated Tuesday.

The letter said that longtime close cooperation between Syria and Lebanon had enabled Syria to decrease its troop levels to 10,000 from 40,000, "coupled with the full withdrawal of these troops before the forthcoming elections in Lebanon."

Syrian UN Ambassador Fayssal Mekdad said a joint Syrian-Lebanese coordinating committee would meet before Saturday to set a timetable for the withdrawal. The meeting would take place just before the expected arrival in the region of Annan's special envoy, Terje Roed-Larsen.

Syria submitted the letter as the UN Security Council met in closed session to discuss a resolution, drafted by the United States and France, that would authorize an independent international investigation into the Feb. 14 killing of former Lebanese Prime Minister Rafik al-Hariri.

An outside investigation was recommended by a UN fact-finding mission led by Irish Deputy Police Commissioner Peter Fitzgerald, which said a Lebanese inquiry into the killing "suffers from serious flaws and has neither the capacity nor the commitment to reach a satisfactory and credible conclusion."

The mission also said Syrian military intelligence "bore primary responsibility for a lack of security, protection and law and order" in Lebanon at the time of Hariri's death.

Al-Shara took strong issue with the mission's findings, saying it ignored "cordial and long relations" between Syrian leaders and Hariri.

The minister flatly denied as "untrue" the report's account of a threat of "physical harm" by Syrian President Bashar al-Assad against Hariri prior to his Sept. 8 resignation as Lebanon's prime minister.

The report cited numerous accounts of the meeting between the two based on Hariri's statements to others. They had met to discuss extending the term of Lebanon's Syrian-backed President Emile Lahoud, which Hariri and Druze opposition leader Walid Jumblatt opposed.

Assad was quoted as saying he "would rather break Lebanon over the heads of Hariri and Jumblatt than see his word in Lebanon broken."

Al Shara asked that the reference to Assad be deleted from the UN report.

A resolution sponsored by the United States and France, adopted by the 15-nation council last Sept. 2, had called on Syria to withdraw all its military and intelligence forces from Lebanon, but it did not set a timetable. *Reuters*

THREE boys walk with their father through the streets ruined by Monday's earthquake in Gunung Sitoli on Nias Island, Indonesia. AP

Rescuers comb rubble on quake-hit Indon isle

GUNUNGSITOLI, Indonesia—Rescuers and survivors combed through the rubble of collapsed buildings on Indonesia's quake-devastated Nias island at dawn on Wednesday after a night of rain and aftershocks.

At least 1,000 people were killed by Monday's huge quake which hit this island famed as a surfing paradise, flattening parts of its main town, Gunungsitoli, according to officials.

Rescue and body recovery efforts have been hampered by a shortage of fuel and poor weather following the magnitude 8.7 quake—which came just three months after a Dec. 26 quake and tsunami left as some 300,000 people killed or missing around the Indian Ocean.

Monday's quake sparked fear across the Indian ocean region that another tsunami would strike, but initially panicked residents of coastal areas have returned to normal life.

"The main problem now is logistical issues. It is very hard to move the victims," said T. Rizal Nurdin, governor of North Sumatra province.

"It is like the situation in December. There is no logistical support like fuel," he said, adding that three Singaporean military Chinook helicopters were expected to arrive later on Wednesday.

Local police could be seen heading towards the town centre in a truck on Wednesday as dawn broke.

"We are going to find bodies," said one officer. *Reuters*

Schiavo case unexpectedly unites Americans

WASHINGTON—The Terri Schiavo case has had the unexpected effect of uniting most Americans, whether Republicans or Democrats, around a consensus that the government should stay out of families' life and death decisions.

"You don't see many 80 percents in polls nowadays," said pollster Andrew Kohut of the Pew Research Center.

He was referring to a CBS poll last week which found that 82 percent of Americans felt Congress should have stayed out of Schiavo's case.

The Florida woman's husband and parents have been battling for years over whether to remove the feeding tube keeping her alive, 15 years since she lapsed into a persistent vegetative state after suffering a heart attack.

The poll also showed 75 percent of respondents said end-of-life issues were not the province of government. Another poll this month by Time magazine found that 70 percent of respondents thought President George W. Bush should not have intervened in the case and 65 percent said he and Congress were motivated more by politics than values and principles.

Schiavo's fate has made world headlines and dominated news coverage in the United States for three weeks.

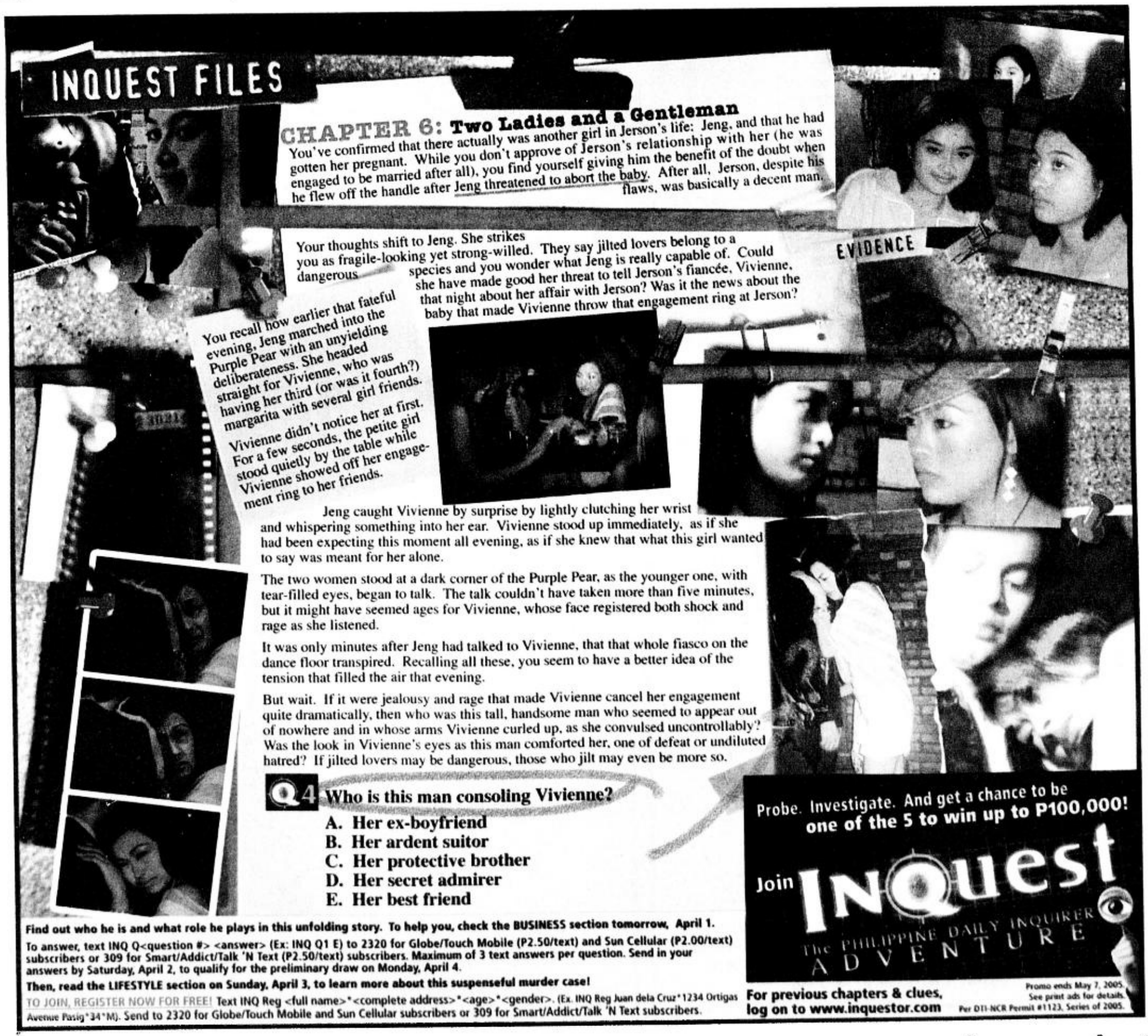
In a country bitterly divided between Republican "red states" and Democratic "blue states," many citizens seemed angry with both parties and have made up their own minds, pollster John Zogby said.

Republicans who uphold principles of limited government, states' rights and the sanctity of the marital bond were upset their leaders had become involved. Democrats seemed upset that their leaders had mostly stayed silent on the issue.

"America has united on this under the banner of 'a pox on both your houses.' This is an intensely personal issue and people of all political stripes were repulsed at the idea of the government getting involved," Zogby said.

Past studies have shown that most people do not want doctors or hospitals to make end-of-life decisions, much less the government or courts. Nearly everyone wants such decisions controlled by themselves and their families.

At her husband's request, a feeding tube keeping Schiavo alive was removed on March 18 and she has been drifting slowly toward death since then, as her parents rushed from one court to another seeking an order to have the tube replaced. *Reuters*



Iraqi parliament's 2nd session ends in chaos

BAGHDAD—The new Iraqi parliament's second session has ended in chaos as deputies failed to select a new speaker and jeered one another, prompting warnings that the body is risking its credibility.

With the government in limbo two months after the Jan. 30 election, insurgents caused further mayhem Tuesday, exploding a car bomb in the ethnically divided city of Kirkuk, killing one person and wounding 17.

The parliamentary session was held up for almost three hours as the winning Shiite and Kurdish blocs waited for the Sunni minority to decide on a candidate for speaker.

Within minutes, acting speaker Sheikh Dhari al-Fayad stunned the audience of political veterans, asking the 275-member assembly to adjourn because of the quarrel over the choice of his successor, a largely symbolic post.

"The principal lists are asking to delay the vote for another time so the Sunnis can finish talks among themselves to choose a nominee," he said.

A raucous atmosphere ensued as the 87-year-old acting speaker ejected the press from the session and MPs started ranting over the impasse.

Underscoring the violence that the new government must confront, two mortar rounds shook the Green Zone where the parliament is based just minutes before the session convened.

Two months after the election, the country's ethnic and religious groups have stumbled in forming a government, quarreling over important posts such as the oil ministry and contentious issues like Islam's role in politics.

The Shiites and Kurds had agreed to award the post of speaker to one of around 20 Sunni Arabs in parliament in a bid to reach out to the embittered community, which largely boycotted the election.

The Shiites were backing United Iraqi Alliance member Sheikh Fawaz al-Jarba, a Sunni tribal leader from the powerful Shammar tribal confederation. *AFP*

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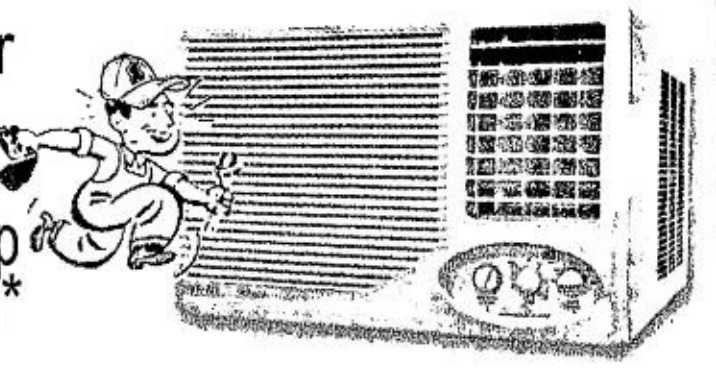

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UN sets sanctions on Sudan

UNITED NATIONS—The UN Security Council voted on Tuesday to impose a travel ban and an asset freeze on those responsible for atrocities against civilians in Sudan's Darfur region or who violate a ceasefire there.

The vote was by 12 to 0 with three abstentions: China, Russia and Algeria.

The sanctions will come into effect in 30 days, after a list of offenders has been drawn up by a Security Council committee including all members of the 15-nation body.

The US-drafted resolution would also strengthen an arms embargo on Sudan and forbid the Khartoum government from offensive military flights into Darfur.

It says the Sudanese government should notify the Security Council before sending military equipment to the western region, where tens of thousands of people have been killed and some two million have been herded into squalid camps.

"We are pleased that 12 members of the council voted to adopt this resolution," US envoy Stuart Holliday told reporters. "We hope it will put the appropriate pressure on all the parties to the Darfur conflict to end this tragic chapter." *Reuters*

Pope fails to speak as he blesses crowd

VATICAN CITY—Pope John Paul II barely managed to make a rasping sound into a microphone Wednesday as he appeared at his apartment window overlooking St. Peter's Square to bless thousands of pilgrims.

A crowd of several thousand cheered and clapped loudly as the ailing Pontiff appeared and made the sign of the cross several times.

A microphone was briefly placed in front of the Pope as he struggled to express himself, and then gave up. The Pope, who last appeared to pilgrims on Easter Sunday, appeared to have lost weight.

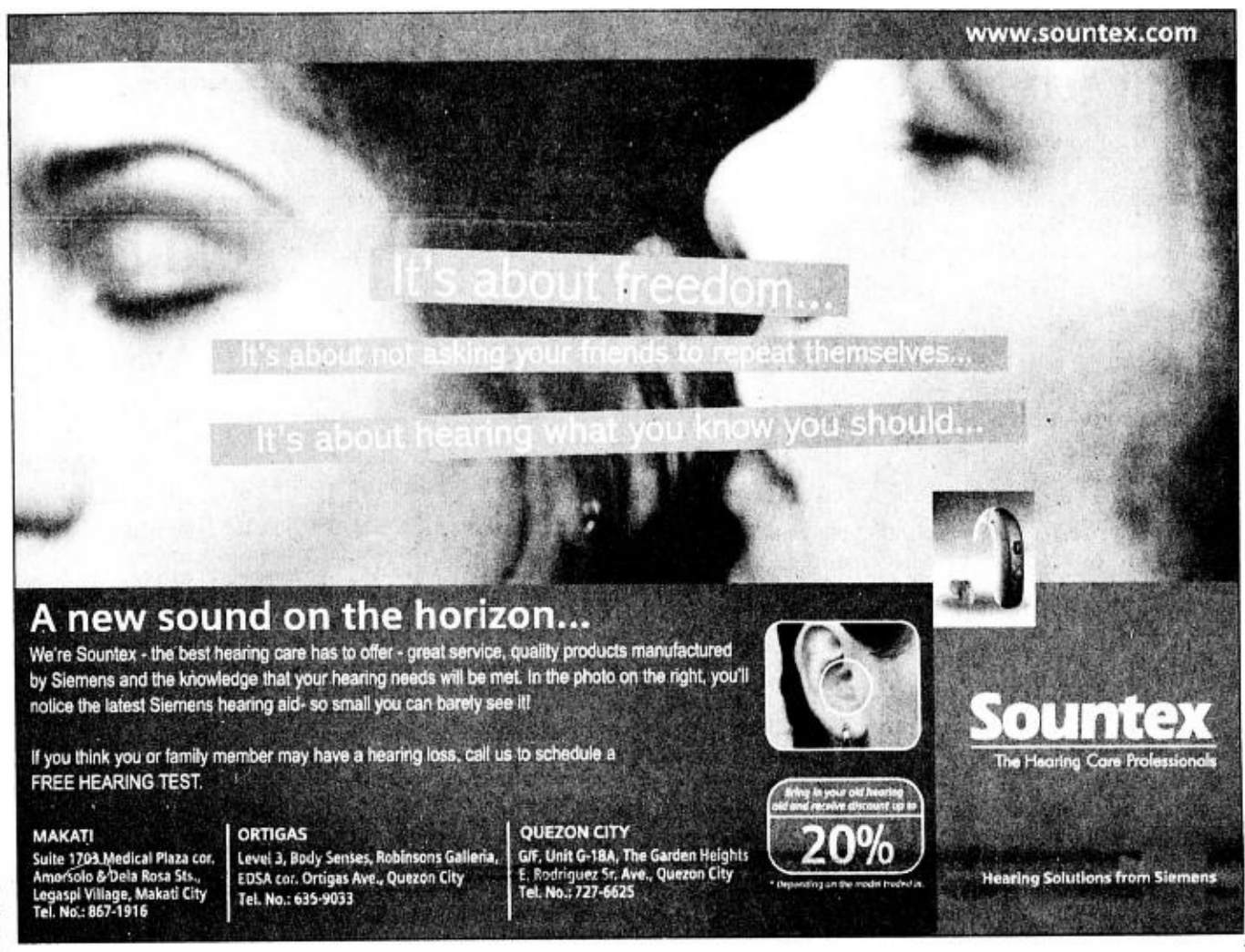
"I felt something go through my body. To me it was a miracle," said Elizabeth Palmares, of San Francisco, showing her hands still trembling more than 10 minutes after the Pope appeared at his window.

Palmares said she was nonetheless not reassured by the Pope's appearance.

"He looks tired... sick," she said, adding that it was still important that he make these appearances because "it gives people faith and hope."

"We really appreciate the fact that he comes to see us despite all his problems," said Eleonora de Andreis, a 13-year-old girl from the north of Italy.

Mexican tourist Estella Ochoa was still in tears as she related her happiness over being able to see the pope for the first time. "It's really marvellous." *AFP*



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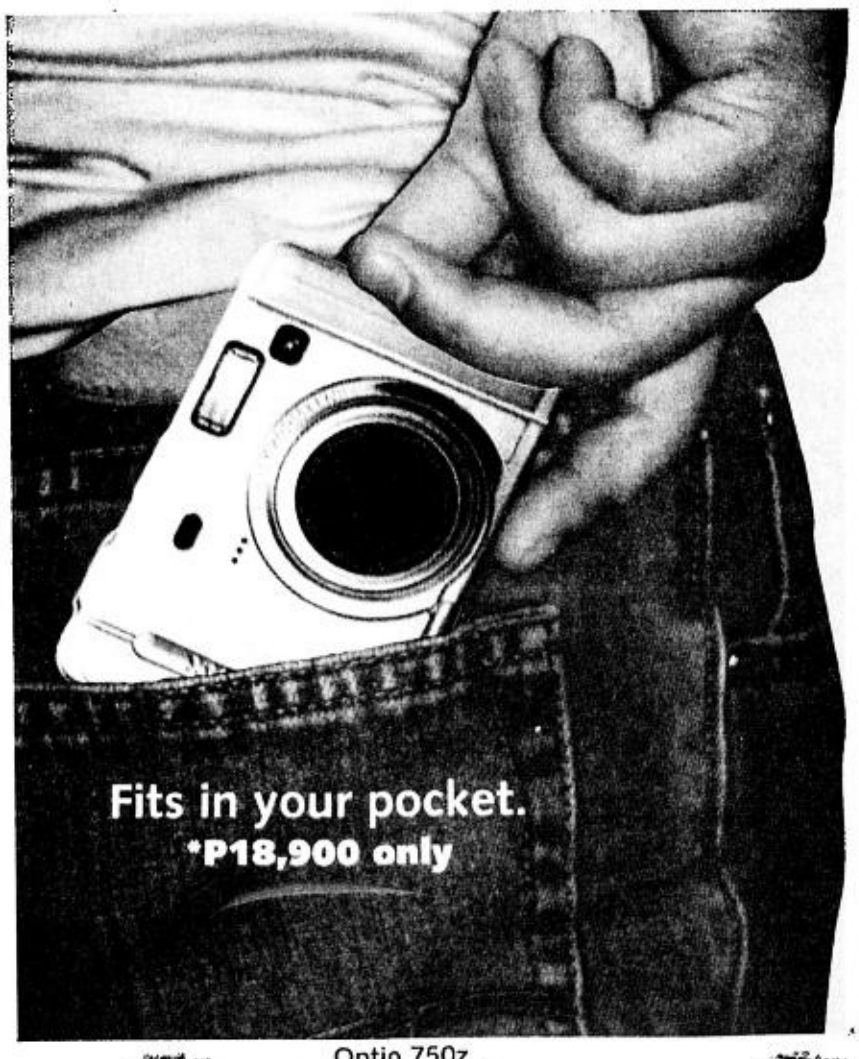

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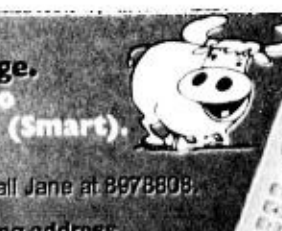
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OPINION

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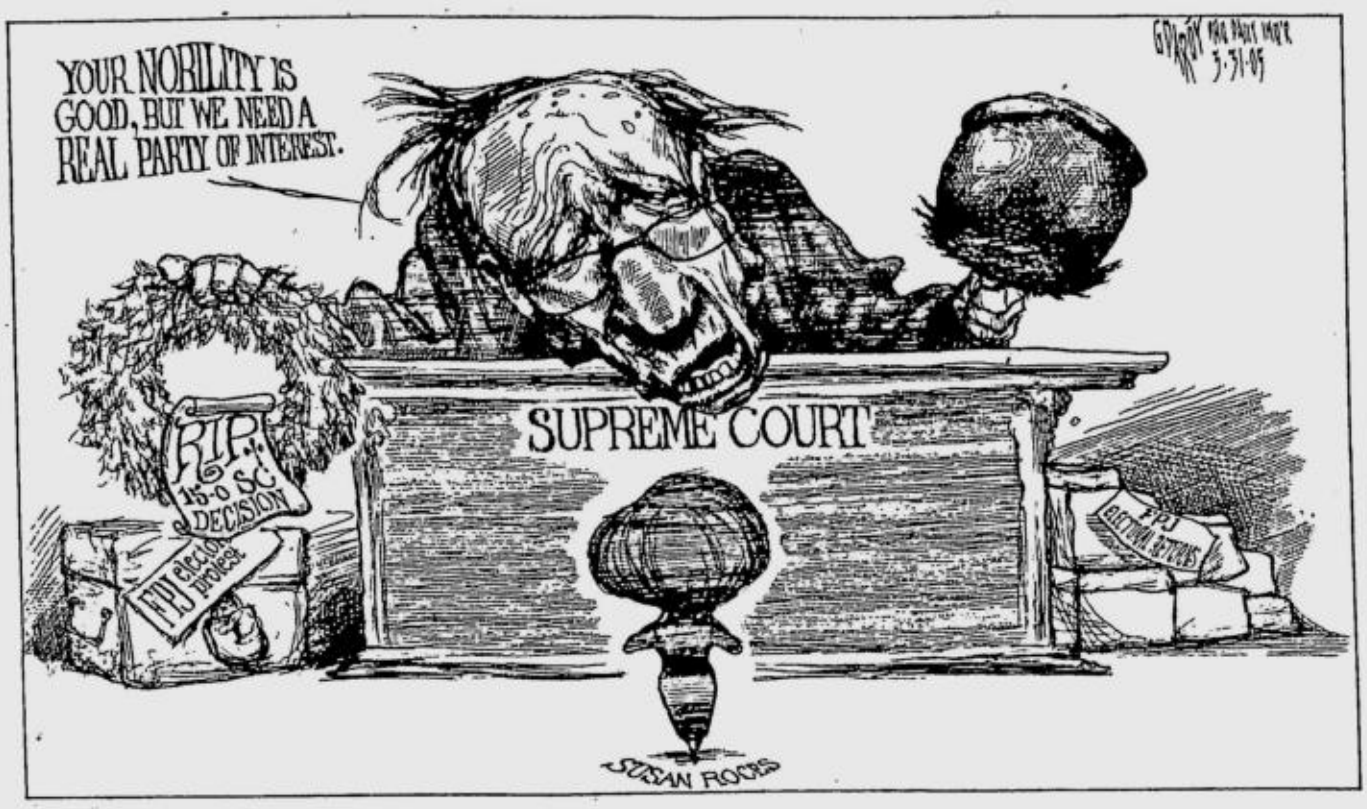

Last card

EDITORIAL

SENATE President Franklin Drilon is confident that the Senate will be able to pass its version of the value-added tax amendments during the three-day special session that started yesterday. Senate Minority Leader Aquilino Pimentel Jr., however, says Malacañang is dreaming if it expects to have a revised VAT law before the week is over.

Everyone will know soon enough who between the two is right, of course. But much, much more is at stake here than knowing whose crystal ball is clearer.

In a new paper which they released on Good Friday (not by some happenstance, we are sure), the 11 professors of the UP School of Economics, who had earlier warned of an impending economic collapse unless the government put order into its finances, called on Congress to pass a VAT law that is "right in form and adequate to the economy's needs." "The shape of the VAT law .... will dictate whether or not the country remains in a fiscal sickbed," they said.

What the economists regard as a "right" and "adequate" VAT law is one that would substantially help the government raise some P108 billion yearly—half of it to "placate the financial markets" and refinance maturing debts, and therefore avert a financial crisis; the other half to fill up serious and disastrous deficiencies in social programs like education, health and nutrition.

Up to this time, seven months after the UP-11 first sounded the warning, Congress has passed only one measure that would help raise additional revenues. This is the watered-down version of the so-called "sin taxes" on cigarettes and alcoholic drinks which has been projected to produce at most an additional P6.7 billion yearly. The projected P10 billion additional collection from the Lateral Attrition Law has been dismissed as little more than a wish.

In the meantime, the administration has been forced to drop four of its tax proposals either because of intense lobbying by affected parties, such as the telecommunications companies, or because these were ill-conceived in the first place. Amending the VAT has thus become the administration's last card, the only one it can play to avert the financial crisis that President Macapagal-Arroyo prematurely and ill-advisedly declared to have been overcome last year.

Even this has been so badly mangled in both the Senate and the House of Representatives—either through the grant of so many exemptions disguised as safety nets, or the elimination of existing taxes like, of all things, the 19-percent amusement tax levied on nightclubs—that doubts have been expressed if it would raise even half of the P64 billion it is supposed to yield. Solita Monsod, one of the UP-11, for instance, has said that taken together the VAT amendments and related measures being considered by the Senate (which wants to retain the rate at 10 percent but lift most of the existing exemptions) could result in a net revenue increase of only P5.5 billion. The UP-11 as a group is more generous, saying that with the way things are shaping up, the government could raise as much as P30 billion from the amended VAT, or a total of P41.7 billion from the whole tax reform package.

That amount is obviously far short of even just the P54 billion needed to stave off a crisis. But in what is surely a sign of desperation, the administration is no longer counting how much the tax reform package would yield. A top Malacañang official said it hardly matters now what version of the VAT bill is passed. What is more important is that the bill is passed. He just fell short of saying that a bad law would be better than no law at all. What is important is that we send the message, said the official, and that message is that the government is serious in carrying out tax reforms and improving its financial position. It is a message that is meant to pacify jittery stock and currency markets as well as international credit rating agencies, and reassure international creditors and foreign investors, he added.

As if that were not enough to underscore how pivotal and critical VAT is, the official hinted that Ms Arroyo would even be willing to sign a bill that would give her wide latitude in applying the revised VAT, including its timing. Meaning she is willing to take the flak and the political fallout from what is surely going to be an unpopular measure.

That is a challenge hurled at the Senate, and the senators should respond by shedding some of their selfish, politically-motivated apprehensions. The clock is ticking away and before we know it the day of reckoning may be at hand.

Old-fashioned greed

VIEWPOINT

Juan L. Mercado

IN THIS so-called "strong republic" of President Macapagal-Arroyo, the greatest crime is not looting the treasury. That happens every day. Ferdinand Marcos and Joseph Estrada looted earlier with panache, claims Transparency International in its "List of the World's Most Corrupt Leaders."

Nor is the scramble to punch massive legal loopholes from taxes the main felony. In their paper, "The Economy On A Cusp," UP School of Economics professors observed that taipan Lucio Tan convinced all-too-willing-to-be-convinced legislators to lavish such bounties on his firms. Lawmakers debate, meanwhile, how much more they'll soak suckers like us.

So, is it blowing the whistle on crooks? In this country, those who do so get knifed in the end. Remember Public Estates Authority's Sulficio Tagud? For exposing cost-padding in Macapagal Boulevard, he was savaged. Adm. Guillermo Wong revealed that only P266 was left of a P64.9-million allocation for a Cavite base that was never built and his postings were frozen. Land Bank's Acsa Ramirez landed in a police lineup for ripping a tax refund scam apart.

Add Marlene Garcia-Esperat to that headcount. The 45-year-old columnist found what 61 incorrigible whistle-blowers (a.k.a journalists) discovered too late: for your trouble, all you get is a slug between the eyes, in front of your children, plus a wilted Malacañang wreath.

But crime is different where many live by "pecuniary decency," i.e., net worth equals self worth.

Lip service is paid to what the Teacher from Galilee insisted on: "A man's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions." But in daily life, bank balances, car models (plural), gated enclaves to $20,000-a-day Las Vegas hotel suites, jewelry, vacation residences, etc. determine what doors open. They set the pecking order at dinner tables.

Wealth also buys immunity and impunity. The Supreme Court convicted Ferdinand Marcos Jr. for tax evasion, but he's not in the slammer. The Philippine Ports Authority took two years to draft implementing rules for the President's Executive Order No. 170. Stevedoring companies, at roll-on-roll-off-ports pocketed, meanwhile, fees for non-existent services. And no masterminds of those journalists' rub-outs were ever nailed. How's that for a "strong republic"?

In this skewed setting, the heinous "crime" is to be poor. Hundreds of kids are born everyday into impoverished families, often in a city slum hovel or a rundown farm shack, today's version of the stable. "There were over four million more poor people in 2000 than in 1985," notes the Asian Development Bank in "Poverty in the Philippines." "The real average income of the bottom 30 percent of the population contracted by about 6 percent from 2000 to 2003 ... The signs point to an increase over 2000 poverty levels."

Most are unable to break out of this quagmire, and turn out losers in this "ovarian lottery." The upper half of people corner roughly 82 centavos out of every peso. The 17 centavos left is parceled out by the lower half: scrawny ill-fed kids, anemic mothers, jobless fathers with blank eyes, beggars. They blur into the woodwork. We do not see Lazarus at the gate.

The most galling disparity is their truncated lives. More kids from the slums will go to premature graves than those in homes of the better-off. Wealth buys better nutrition, sanitation, health care, education.

The poor lack that and are voiceless, powerless. The impoverished Atis of Boracay today symbolize this vulnerability. These aboriginal folk have rights, under RA 8371, to stay in Sitio Balobog. But wealthy land claimants are fencing them off in de facto eviction.

"The fencing separated 15 houses of Ati families from around 20 others homes," Kalibo Bishop Jose Lazo wrote in a March 28 letter to President Arroyo. "The fence also restricted their freedom of movement as the Atis have to stretch the barbed wire to pass through."

Sen. Jamby Madrigal spoke up for them and then fell silent. "Barbed wire is not what the doctor ordered for Boracay's tourism image. Filipino NGOs call this 'development aggression,'" Ma. Serena Diokno wrote in a Carnegie Council on Ethics and International Affairs paper. The struggle is for "survival rights." The Atis want a chance to live while land claimants are out for the next million bucks.

Bishop Gabriel Reyes (now assigned to Antipolo) asked the President to help in 2000. She did nothing. Will she respond five years later to the new plea for help?

The President's men—Secretaries Angelo Reyes, Mike Defensor and Rene Villa—shrugged off Madrigal's challenge to apply to the Atis the administration's claim that a "strong republic" will ensure compassion for the weakest.

That will fan more oppression and a flood of apologias from the Palace for repeated failure to "redress immemorial wrongs." In his farewell address, Food and Agriculture Organization representative Dioscoro Umali made an insightful comment on such charades:

"Critics insist that our flawed strategies were not the result of poor judgment. We confused the problem of poverty with social injustices that were its cause. They claim it was, at rock bottom, a simple old-fashioned case of greed. Avarice rationalized betrayal of the weak.

"I pray this assessment is wrong. For if it should prove correct, then we have much to answer for those whose lives were blighted by poverty."

***

E-mail: juan_mercado@pacific.net.ph

Moving fingers

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

THE SUPREME Court ruling on Fernando Poe Jr.'s electoral protest, as filed by his wife, Susan Roces, is a classic in many respects. It is a classic above all in unintended literary irony. My friend, Isagani Cruz, a most literate justice, who is now unfortunately retired (but who fortunately applies his skills to writing for this newspaper), should really advise his active colleagues to examine their literary allusions well, to make sure they aid their cause.

In a 14-page resolution, the Court ruled to throw out Roces' protest with these opening lines: "The Moving Finger writes; and having writ,/ Moves on: nor all your Piety nor Wit/ Shall lure it back to cancel half a Line/ Nor all your tears wash out a Word of it." It's the most famous stanza from Omar Khayyam's poem, "The Rubaiyat." The Court means to tell Roces that what's done is done, it cannot be undone.

That is all very well, except for one thing. In Edward Fitzgerald's translation at least, which is what the Supreme Court uses, the Moving Finger refers to the one that writes a message to Belshazzar, King of Babylon. As Bible-readers know, the story—found in the Book of Daniel—is that in the middle of a feast, Belshazzar and guests beheld a hand writing on a palace wall the words, "Mene, mene, tekel, upharsin." The King commanded his seers to interpret it, but no one could, or would. He then had Daniel brought before him, who, without thought for his head as the bringer of bad news, forthwith said:

"Mene, mene" meant "God has numbered your kingdom." "Tekel" meant "You have been weighed and found wanting," or as the Tagalog so well puts it, *"Tinimbang Ka, Ngunit Kulang."* And "peres" meant "Your kingdom will be torn up and divided." Indeed, neither newly-discovered piety nor wit prevented it from happening.

Bill Clinton invoked the same quote when he was being impeached for lying about his sexual dalliances. He added: "Not tears nor wit nor torment can alter what I have done. I have to make my peace with that." This provoked a columnist of the Los Angeles Times Syndicate, Cal Thomas, to write:

"The poem...contains a deeper and far more important message for him. He also (like King Belshazzar) has demonstrated arrogance and pride. He has flouted the law and behaved as if the presidency were his by right...

"Given such history and evidence of the president's disrespect for the law, the House is right to move forward with articles of impeachment. The Senate, if it is principled, should vote to remove him from office. Such acts will not tie up the country. They will serve as a purgative. They will affirm that no one is above the law, nor should anyone, including the president, be able to hide behind opinion polls or clever statements to avoid being held accountable to the law."

The same principle applies here. The quote does not apply to Susan Roces, it applies to the Court's current patron (by now almost self-evident), Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo. The Moving Finger has spoken, and neither newly-discovered piety nor wit may alter a word of it: God has numbered her government; she has been weighed and found wanting; her country will be torn up and divided.

The rest of the Supreme Court's argument is anti-climactic. It says Roces does not have the legal personality to protest her husband being cheated because she does not stand to inherit the presidential mantle anyway. That is more than a vacuous technicality, that is a vicious suggestion. It proposes that future candidates who plan to cheat their rivals would do well to murder them afterward. No beneficiary, no case.

"We laud (Roces') noble intention and her interest to find out the true will of the electorate," the Court adds. "However nobility of intention is not the point of reference in determining whether a person may intervene in an election protest." Well, what the hell is the modifier "supreme" in Supreme Court for, if that court cannot see that finding out "the true will of the electorate" supersedes all other concerns, above all technical ones? Can anything be more important?

The case has a direct beneficiary, and that is the people. The people deserve to have the president they voted for, not the president that the Comelec, the Namfrel and the Electorial Tribunal took it upon themselves to install. It is the supreme duty of the court, above all the supreme one, to give them that. I myself do not particularly care if FPJ would have made a good president or not, that is irrelevant, that is not what we have elections for. The only question is whether he won or not. Does it matter what man or woman, angel or beast, hounds the court with the doggedness of the Furies?

The Supreme Court itself, with richly poetic irony, tells us what this case is all about with its opening lines. It is about justice, which is what law, too, is all about. It is about morality, which is what governance is all about. It is about right and wrong, the discernment of which justices are there for. This Supreme Court has no higher task than finding out whether the right president rules this country or not. Life does not go on that is burdened by iniquity. It is impaled where it stands and rots there. If GMA cheated in the elections, then she should be impeached. To paraphrase Thomas: It will not tie up the country. It will serve as a purgative. It will affirm that no one is above the law, nor should anyone, including the president, be able to hide behind force and farce and to avoid being held accountable to the law.

Unfortunately, all the moving fingers the justices know are the ones that run up and down their limp possessions and give them disconsolate pleasure. It gives whole new meanings to pornography.

Pass that VAT law

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan

AS I wrote this column yesterday afternoon, the three-day special session called by President Macapagal-Arroyo for Congress to pass the urgently needed expanded VAT bill was supposed to begin. At that point, however, the fate of the special session hung in suspense as some senators keenly watched whether the House could muster a quorum of 120 members. As of yesterday afternoon, only 100 members of the House were present. Majority Leader Prospero Nograles, who is himself still in the United States, asserted that the special session could proceed even with only one chamber meeting the quorum requirement. But some senators insisted that a quorum was needed in both chambers. A fiery debate was expected on the issue.

* * *

The House had passed its version of the expanded VAT bill many weeks ago. The special session would leave its members twiddling their thumbs while their Senate counterparts deliberated on their own version of the bill. After which, both chambers could then hammer out their differences in a bicameral conference committee. That's predicted to be even bloodier, but at least both chambers would already have their respective versions—a big leap forward.

The House reduced into a mere spectator at this point could help explain why some of its members lacked the sense of urgency to attend yesterday's scheduled opening. But we, citizens, sincerely pray that not only would the special session proceed, but that it would result in the passage of the VAT bill.

* * *

Pressure has mounted from various citizens' groups for the bill's passage. Francis Chua, president of the Chamber of Commerce of the Philippines and executive VP of the Federation of Filipino Chinese Chambers of Commerce, warned that failure to pass it would produce a stalemate and loss of confidence among foreign investors. This, in turn, would have "unwarranted bad repercussions for the economy." On the other hand, Eastern Samar Gov. Ben Evardone, speaking for the LGUs, urged the senators to pass that law or have the country face dire prospects of fiscal and economic collapse.

* * *

The pro-VAT advocates got a shot in the arm when 11 professors of the UP School of Economics, who had earlier warned of an impending fiscal crisis, warned that without a credible VAT law increasing the VAT rate, the government's fiscal reform program would have no leg to stand on. They stressed that it's the only significant revenue measure still pending among the original eight measures (two have already been passed) sent up to Congress. Terming its passage a "bare minimum," the "profs" stressed that it's "an inevitable and basic component of any adequate formula to address the fiscal crisis."

I had long exhorted the Senate to pass that VAT bill, arguing that while any consumption tax will hurt the taxpayers, hurting a little now is a better option than an impending economic and fiscal collapse.

* * *

In Baguio last Holy Thursday, Senate President Franklin Drilon invited a small group of friends to the Baguio Country Club for lunch. Of course, the main topic inevitably was what his chamber would do about the VAT. Drilon lived up to his name—he was frank and candid as well as patient in answering all our queries. But he also lost no time to twit us media, especially myself, about how we kept needling the Senate to pass the VAT bill when it was obvious that we needed to have a better understanding of it.

But Drilon was also quick to admit that when the Senate began tackling this very complex subject over two months ago, he didn't understand much either, despite his having been a corporate lawyer. He stressed that he had to study it, like he did with some few issues in the past. In fact, he brought to Baguio an attaché case full of papers and documents, including a VAT bible of sorts. "It's not a vacation for Frank, it's work," said his wife Mila, who aired her own VAT queries. Mila was joined by Tessie Villarama, the stage and movie actress-wife of former Bulacan Rep. Willie Villarama, who wanted to know how much VAT would eat up from her earnings.

* * *

The queries must have made it clear to the Senate chief that most of his guests, except perhaps former Sen. Heherson Alvarez, didn't understand much how the VAT works. So he walked over to the white board and began explaining with a diagram the relation between the buyer who always pays the "output VAT" and the seller, who always pays the "input VAT." Professor Drilon's explanations helped clear a lot of cobwebs. We all agreed that the Department of Finance should do what he just did: explain the VAT in the simplest manner possible. But I stressed to him that my clearer understanding only heightened my intention to nag the Senate into passing the VAT bill.

* * *

Asked as to when the Senate would pass its version, Drilon said that all his colleagues agree that it has to be passed. I then shared Sen. Joker Arroyo's view, recently aired over the dzRH program Cecile Alvarez and I co-host, that we need the expanded VAT law—"*wala tayong magagawa diyan.*" But Arroyo and Drilon refused to be nailed down to a definite "when." The Senate chief has told his colleagues that inasmuch as all of them are in agreement over the need for VAT—after holding no less than five caucuses on it—"why not pass it now?" So what's delaying it? He stressed that there are huge differences on various points. For instance, by the DOF's computation, the income to be derived from a new VAT on power, hitherto exempted, is P800 million, but the Senate ways and means chair and sponsor of the VAT bill, Sen. Ralph Recto, places it at P15 billion. *(To be continued)*

If, you, do, not, speak, for, us

HUMAN FACE

Ma. Ceres P. Doyo

ANOTHER media practitioner has been gunned down.

I don't easily break into a white rage. What I conjured up in my mind was someone, or maybe myself, mounting a podium in slo-mo then mouthing Sophocles: "Who is the slayer, who the victim?"

And the adrenaline having risen, to declare with Kennedyesque pathos: "If, you, do, not, speak, for, us, you, are, killing, us. And, also, yourselves."

That was just my mind trying to tame the anger that was surging. All I wanted to say in street-corner language was an exploding, "BS to you all who did this, and may you be cursed even in the afterlife." But then one didn't say such things, even silently in one's heart, while Christendom was commemorating the passion of Jesus and his rising from the dead.

Come to think of it, besides ourselves, who is speaking up for the journalists? Who are the individuals, what are the groups and institutions out there that will come to our defense? By speaking, I mean doing something concrete and reaping results.

The government, the church and religious communities, civil society, entertainment and sports celebrities, vendors, jeepney drivers, environmentalists, the Girl Scouts and the Boy Scouts, students, battered women, abused children, drug dependents, rape and kidnap victims, the literati and the culturati, readers and listeners, prostitutes, the urban poor, the rural poor, the indigenous people, intellectuals, professionals?

Who? Who in our address book, cell phone directory and e-mail list? Perhaps no one? The bleakest, self-pitying thought was in my mind when I learned that one more media practitioner/whistle-blower was gunned down last Holy Thursday.

No one. Else why does the killing not stop?

Marlene Garcia-Esperat, 45, was murdered on the night of Holy Thursday. So much like "On the night he was betrayed..." of the Holy Thursday scenario, only this was Tacurong, Sultan Kudarat. Esperat was shot in the face in front of her two sons. Her husband heard the shot.

While working as a chemist at the Department of Agriculture, Esperat uncovered a lot of anomalies and kept exposing them for several years until she left in exasperation. She turned media practitioner and filed cases of corruption with the Ombudsman. She just knew too much. (Full story in the March 29 INQUIRER.)

Esperat was the fourth media practitioner killed this year, the 17th since last year. If you consider the 65 killed since 1986, 17 deaths in the past year and three months are too many. In fact, the Philippines has been declared the second most dangerous place for journalists, next to Iraq. The Philippines as "killing fields" for journalists was featured in the March 21 issue of Time magazine. Three pages were devoted to this dishonorable reputation.

Here it's not stray bullets and bombs that kill, it's bullets with the journalists' name on them. And corruption in high places has a lot to do with the killings. C,o,r,r,u,p,t,i,o,n. Try and give that word a look by using the diacritical marks and the frownies found in your cell phone. You could do a few things with the letter U. I didn't say, press SEND.

The motive for killing a whistle-blower or a journalist is to silence. Revenge is more of an afterthought. Surely there were journalists who had been sucked into the dark side and left their integrity at home and later paid dearly for their indiscretions. An extortionist masquerading as a journalist, no matter how subtly, knows the law of the jungle and will have his comeuppance.

But journalists who do their job well are not a vanishing species. Alas, they are endangered.

Long before Esperat became a media practitioner, that is, as a columnist for the Midland Review in Mindanao, she was already an irrepressible whistleblower in the government bureaucracy. She had the goods, the figures, the names. She was even featured in the Philippine Center for Investigative Journalism's i-magazine as "Madame Witness."

How often have ordinary citizens approached journalists with "inside goods," meaning the rot in the government bureaucracy, be it health, public works, education, defense, justice, and in the case of Esperat, agriculture which is synonymous with food. Almost always, the squealers or sources want to remain unknown. They are afraid for their lives. This is understandable.

What puzzles me is their seeming presumption that journalists are not afraid and are ready to be murdered, ready to leave their families and orphaned children grieving.

You don't want to be identified? I asked someone gently. What about me, *ako ang mapapatay dito* (I'll be the one killed here).

A press release from the office of Sen. Mar Roxas says that the Senate committee on public information and mass media will look into the finding of the International Federation of Journalists on the Philippines as killing fields. This was after Roxas filed Resolution 181 enabling an inquiry into the killing of journalists.

This is very good. But I hope they look into the root causes, the most obvious of which is corruption in government. The corrupt not only steal, they kill.

For today I had intended to write a whole piece on the recent Louie R. Prieto Awards for different categories of stories and photos that came out in the INQUIRER. But then, the shocking news about Esperat... Four of the LRP awards were for the "positive" categories. It's not all bad and sad news, you know.

Joy comes in the morning. Like Mary of Magdala, I exclaim, "Rabboni!" Feel the sound of it. And so Happy Easter.

* * *

Send comments to cerespd@info.com.ph

A personal matter

THE LONG VIEW

Manuel L. Quezon III

THE DISPUTE between the employees' union of the Manila Standard, and Makati Rep. Teodoro L. Locsin Jr., publisher of Today newspaper, is a classic labor-management dispute colored by personalities and cloaked in ethical considerations. The merger of the two papers, now known as Manila Standard Today, has resulted in Locsin being brought in as the publisher of the new publication, and fears on the part of the old Standard staff that some of them will be displaced to make room for Today people. How will new people be accommodated? Should the Standard union welcome them, or resist them? Apparently, the union has decided to resist the immediate entry of any of my former colleagues in Today, where I worked from 1994 to 2004.

Any merger results in awkward, even messy situations, particularly when unions are involved. The Standard union's primary duty is to protect the interests of its members, regardless of whatever arrangements have been made by the management of the merged papers. From reports, it seems that the union insists on a six-month probationary period, which is in keeping with the usual labor policies of most companies. But this only sets the stage for postponing the real fight, which is over editorial and production positions: each paper has its own identity, and the creation of a new one will naturally antagonize people used to things being a certain way.

This is where the question of personalities enters the picture. Locsin is (deservedly) known for his hard-hitting editorial style and fanatical attention to detail. His peerless writing style, editorial dexterity and aesthetic inclinations have been reflected in every publication with which he has been associated; not everyone will like them, not least because he triggers an inferiority complex in so many of his journalistic peers. Add to this an unfortunate notoriety in labor relations, and Locsin's reputation surely not only precedes him, but inspires near-panic in editors, writers and most of all, union leaders.

I do not know what transpired during Locsin's first meeting with the Standard people, but I must confess that I have never seen him being abrasive or dictatorial with staff, although for the purposes of influencing public opinion, it is easy to portray him as such. The myth of his being a booksmart brawler is fostered by his writing style, though it may be far, in truth, from the Locsin most people know.

The question of ethics is a fig leaf to disguise the naked power struggle going on. Having worked with Locsin, and viewing him as my mentor, and remaining associated with him in the Free Press (permitted by this paper since it's not a competitor), I can claim a certain amount of knowledge as to how he conducts himself as a journalist. He was a journalist before he became a politician, and recognizes the responsibilities of both professions. No one had a problem with his being a journalist and a politician so long as he ran his own paper; objections only arose when the merger took place. In his own publications, he was consistent in permitting officials to write, on the perhaps old-fashioned assumption that the reader is discerning enough to realize the inherent biases such writers may have.

As a publisher and editor, his primary concern has always been with editorial writing and the opinion section, and any interventions made in the newsroom were concerned with matters of factual accuracy, grammatical correctness and fairness. All newspapers are, to one extent or another, aware of the need to avoid biting the hand that feeds it, and a regrettable, but real part of this awareness is advocacy, from time to time, of the business or financial interests of the backers of a paper (or its owners). However, this is properly kept to the editorial and opinion sections, and not in the news, the only exception I can think of being exposés in the larger public interest, which might have benefits for aggrieved parties (a case in point was Today's exposing the presence of Agile agents in many government agencies, which unfairly affected the business prospects of companies such as CAP Philippines).

Locsin's loyalties to the House of Representatives end where his higher loyalties to his readers begin: his unmistakable editorials that reveal the often inane, quite frequently larcenous, goings-on during House committee meetings and debates are a case in point. It is foolish (because pointless) to question his integrity because he and his family have conducted themselves more honorably in dealing with government than many so-called independent journalists. Their assets taken by Marcos and given to cronies, Locsin Sr. and Jr. never lifted a finger to use their influence after Edsa to retake what is properly theirs, which is why the cases have moldered in the courts.

The real objection, it seems to me, is a shamefully grounded one. As this paper reported, the Standard employees were less affronted by Locsin's being a politician and more upset by his being an opposition member: "How will directions from the publisher, an opposition congressman, jibe with our policy of supporting the administration?" the Standard employees are said to have asked. Not much ethics, only financial or even political, interest, there.

I wish my former colleagues in Today the best of luck in finding a place in their new paper. I'd suggest that their peers in the Standard would realize they have everything to gain by welcoming them. And as for Locsin, he can teach a thing or two to any journalist about not just ethics, but proper journalism, in every sense. The current fight is an internal matter. It should remain so, and it should be resolved amicably, so that they can all get back to the job they know—and do—best: putting out a good paper.

Unending quest

YOUNG BLOOD

Paul John Caña

We want to know what the young are thinking about. What are their thoughts on current issues? We welcome contributions from the twentysomething and below.—Ed.

WHO was it who said that youth is wasted on the young? It's hard to disagree with him.

I turned 25 a few weeks ago and, for the life of me, I don't know what to answer if I'm asked what is the biggest achievement of my life so far. I suppose I can say that I graduated from college a couple of years earlier than most people and I now work in the news department of one of the biggest media companies in the country, and, yes, I write articles from time to time for a top music magazine. But somehow I have never really felt that these qualify as a "huge" accomplishment. To put it another way, I can't really say I'm living my life "to the fullest," whatever that means.

I would love to say that at this point I'm close to finding out what it is I am meant to do—and to be—for the rest of my life. But the truth is, I'm not. (Or maybe I am, but I'm not ready to knowledge it yet and let it course through my veins.)

Whether or not they care to admit it, I believe most people my age have no idea either. Many of us wander aimlessly about in the vast wasteland after college (for those of us lucky enough to even get to college), living on our never-high-enough salaries from our never-good-enough-jobs. I'm sure there is a tiny percentage of young people out there who seem to have it all: a clear understanding of their place in the world and all the material blessings needed to achieve their goals. But for the rest of us, the search for meaning and purpose continues.

In the movie "Dead Poets Society," maverick English professor John Keating (played by Robin Williams) implores his students: "*Carpe diem.*" That oft-repeated phrase and cursory advice given to young people by their elders, who most likely had never been able to "seize the day" themselves and merely want to impart stock wisdom on impressionable minds, is also one of the easiest to digest and to dismiss. All too often, young people live as though they would be young forever and procrastination becomes a habit. Before we know it, our 20s have passed us by and we tell ourselves, "Hey, this isn't so bad. I could do a lot worse with my life." Thus, the dream of finally doing what we want to do (as opposed to doing what essentially amounts to a "meantime" thing) remains a dream.

The problem sometimes isn't so much our willingness to finally start living the lives we want as trying to find the balance between what is attainable and what is simply beyond our capabilities.

In the same movie, a fellow professor, quoting Tennyson, tells Keating: "Show me the heart unfettered by foolish dreams, and I'll show you a happy man." To which Keating replies, "But it is only in their dreams can men be truly free. T'was always thus and always thus will be."

The kind of person we are, and possibly, who and what we turn out to be, depends on which of these two concepts more closely defines our attitude toward our deepest aspirations. Realists, by nature, are confident of their own abilities and very much aware of their limitations. These people are only as ambitious as they are pragmatic and so they are rarely disappointed.

On the other hand, those who subscribe to the Keating school of thought are bound only by their imagination and limited only by what they dare to dream. They are undaunted by the possibility of failure and are not afraid to take on any challenge. Life is the canvas on which they can paint any picture.

Whichever way we lean, the bottom line is that we all are working toward the same goal: happiness and personal satisfaction. But it doesn't have to end there. In fact, I don't think our struggle to find happiness should ever end, even after we get whatever it is we want in life. Personal fulfillment (of whatever kind) should be an unending quest. I've never believed that "people should be satisfied with what they have." That's like saying those who have nothing should just abandon the desire to improve their lives and simply accept their fate. Similarly, it shouldn't keep people who have achieved what may seem to be enough for others from setting new goals and continuing to work on improving themselves. Contentment should never be confused with complacency.

At this point in my life, while I may not be 100 percent certain of what I really want to do, what my purpose in life is and what I hope to achieve, it helps to be aware of that fact rather than blindly trudging on, without giving any thought to workable objectives and visible goals. At the very least, I'm trying to iron out the kinks in my life and starting to establish closer personal relationships with the people who mean much to me. I would like to think I have learned from the mistakes of the past, but as with many others, I anticipate making more of them in the days ahead. I have also noticed that I'm becoming much more vocal about my feelings, my need to let out how I feel taking precedence over my concern over how others will react. I realize that this can be a bad thing, but hey, *carpe diem*, right?

Paul John Caña, 25, works as a newsdesk administrator in one of the country's top broadcast networks.

NOTICE TO YOUNGBLOOD CONTRIBUTORS:

If you are sending your contributions by e-mail, please address it to youngblood@inquirer.com.ph together with your address and information about your age and the school, course and year you're enrolled in or if employed, the position you're holding and the company you work with.

THEY SAID

Not all at once

"I think you can have everything but you can't have everything all at once."

—TV talk show host Oprah Winfrey, when asked if a girl can have everything

Right direction

"We are not being super-bullish. We are just being practical. The momentum is moving in the right direction."

—Dilip Shahani, head of HSBC's Asia-Pacific fixed income credit research, on the strengthening peso

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No tax on domestic water use

A NUMBER of articles have come out these past days alluding to the plans of the National Water Resources Board (NWRB) to impose a tax for the use of raw water. Allow me to dispel the misconceptions on this issue.

1. The NWRB is considering imposing a regulatory fee based on the volume of raw water extracted from surface and ground water sources by water utilities, recreational users (golf courses), industrial users and other purposes.

2. There are no plans to impose regulatory fees for domestic users that extract water directly from sources.

3. The purpose of the fund is twofold:

a. To provide for the efficient use of water.

b. To raise funds for watershed protection, reforestation, conservation programs (recycling, rainwater harvesting, recharging), water supply and sanitation projects, flood and drought mitigation projects, irrigation projects, awareness programs and other water-related critical projects.

Because this proposal is still in its conceptual stage, no plans have been drawn up. Neither have any public consultations been called yet.

The idea is being considered because the poor lack access to safe drinking water; because over 31 percent of all diseases are waterborne due to poor sanitation; because half of our farmers have poor access to irrigation facilities; because we cannot let the tragedies of Aurora, Quezon and Nueva Ecija happen again; because our existing water sources are deteriorating; and because we need to develop additional water sources for our growing population.

While the Water for the People Network finds "water pricing" immoral, we, at the NWRB, believe that it is immoral for those enjoying access to water not to help the poor who suffer from lack of it. And if the NWRB is courting a social upheaval by helping the unfortunate, then it is a change this country desperately needs.

—RAMON B. ALIKPALA,
executive director,
National Water Resources Board,
8/F NIA Bldg., Edsa,
Diliman, Quezon City

Private sector workers one with media

THE RISING incidence of physical assaults against members of the media is very alarming. Not a few fearless journalists and hard-hitting radio broadcasters and commentators have been killed in the line of duty. In 2004, 13 journalists were killed, and the killing spree goes on. (This year, four have been felled, the latest of whom, was gunned down last Maundy Thursday.)

The threats and attacks have not stopped. It is unfortunate that justice remains elusive to the victims and survivors of such violations of press freedom and human rights. The killers remain scot-free. And the government has not taken any significant steps to prevent the menace from escalating and to protect media workers.

Instead of shielding media workers from further assault, the Arroyo government, through the Armed Forces of the Philippines, wants to suppress the media by proposing to penalize journalists and news organizations that interview suspected terrorists. This suggestion is an outright violation of press freedom and the people's right to know. We do not want a blanket media gag at a time when people are struggling to keep heads above a sea of lies and misinformation put out by apologists in the service of Malacañang, big capitalists and landlords.

We are appalled with the unabated attacks against media workers. Wage earners, as well as urban, rural poor and other basic social sectors, often seek the media's help to expose and bring to national attention our daily situation and struggles in workplaces, farmlands and urban poor communities.

Like other working people, media workers are beleaguered with the daily problem of insufficient wages, increasing daily cost of living, high prices of goods, petroleum products and public utilities. They also face threats of retrenchments and job insecurity. In fact, the painstaking fight for the across-the-board, across-the-country P125-wage increase includes media workers in all television and radio outfits, publications, printing presses, publishing houses and other media-related companies.

Given these circumstances, we encourage our fellow workers in the media to remain vigilant at all times. Media workers must exert further efforts to organize, unite and educate their ranks so as to protect their rights and welfare.

Workers in the private sector regard the fight to stop media killings, harassments and other attacks on media workers as part of the labor movement's legitimate fight for better working and living conditions. We vow to be active participants in the fight for the protection of media workers and the struggle for freedom of the press, freedom of speech and expression, and the people's right to know. Together, we will fight for justice, and together, we will win in our struggles.

—JOEL MAGLUNSOD,
secretary general,
Kilusang Mayo Uno Labor Center,
63 Narra St., Barangay Claro,
Project 3, Quezon City

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LETTERS

Soup commercial in bad taste

ADVERTISEMENTS are meant to make a certain product known to consumers. But this TV commercial of a soup product, which has been on air for quite some time, goes beyond its purpose. It is insensitive, disgusting, foul, because it discriminates against Filipinos. It also presents the Chinese culture in a bad light.

The commercial shows a Chinese grandfather barging into the home of his grandson (purportedly also a Chinese) and his Filipina wife. All of a sudden, he bursts into cries of frustration: "*Hindi* Chinese!" The company should take note that we are Filipinos here in the Philippines.

It also shows certain Philippine products, thus subtly telling the TV audience that Philippine-made products are of poor quality. For the information of whoever thought of this advertisement, the Chinese products flooding the global market mostly are mass-produced and cheap and much poorer in quality than Filipino products.

The commercial also shows a Kung-Fu pose, imitating a wood carving on the wall, showing a Filipino couple dancing a Filipino folk dance. Again, our folk dances are graceful, entertaining, but sad to say, being forgotten and lost.

Then the commercial shows the Filipino wife smiling as she cooks Chinese soup to appease the grandfather. We find this demeaning for Filipinos. The commercial directly assaults the Filipino. It should be banned from all media.

Mabuhay ang Pilipino!

—FELIPE ROMMEL D. MARTINEZ,
f_rommel2000@yahoo.com

Helpless against skyrocketing oil prices

THE EDITORIAL on oil prices ("In the same fix," PDI, 3/10/05) is very striking for one thing—it did not come close one iota to suggesting how the Philippines could get oil prices down.

Let's take a look at one suggestion: scrap the oil deregulation law. Subsidizing oil prices—which is really the only other alternative—would mean the government will subsidize the crude and gasoline consumption of rich Filipinos. The simple truth is that the government cannot afford subsidizing oil prices. So any panel to discuss a review of the deregulation law is what it is—a sham. It is a fig leaf for a government that cannot tell its people that it can do nothing about soaring crude costs.

Developing those inventions cited in the editorial may be more expensive than replacing the cars and other assorted vehicles that run on Philippine roads. It is easy to invent one vehicle, infinitely harder to put the whole thing into production. So who will pay for that exercise of putting the production facilities together in a venture that can easily flop? When you come right down to it, neither the Philippine government nor the US government, for that matter, can do anything to control fuel costs.

Unless the Philippines can produce enough of its own oil, we and the rest of the non-oil producing world have to pay through the nose for our energy needs. What the energy undersecretary is saying is plain truth—oil prices have risen to fresh highs because the OPEC keeps a tight rein on output, and demand during the northern hemisphere winter is robust—so we have to make the best out of a bad situation.

The summer driving season in the United States will start in May, putting further pressure on prices. In every other country around the world, citizens pay the costs of consuming energy and accept them as a fact of (a nasty) life. It's time we grew up for a change and be mature about oil prices.

—RENE PASTOR,
Rpastor47@aol.com

Puzzling suggestion

IF the suggestion that the government only has to buy back its majority share in Petron so it can influence oil price movements had come from a neophyte and unschooled senator, it would have been understandable. But that it should come from no less than Senate President Franklin Drilon himself puzzles me.

Following Drilon's logic, the government should also consider buying the largest drug firm in the country so that medicines could be sold much cheaper to the public.

Drilon's suggestion shows an utter lack of understanding of the intricate market forces at play in the oil industry. The suggestion becomes frightening considering that Drilon wields an awesome power that can alter the outcome of the debate on the crucial VAT bill now pending in Congress.

The fact is, the government does not have control over the fluctuations in oil prices. And this is not because of deregulation. Even if the government were to buy the majority shares of the big three oil companies here, it will never be in a position to influence price movements simply because the decisions are made abroad. It would be another story if the government wants to operate at a loss in order to please the people who ultimately will be the ones to suffer from such a "bleeding heart policy."

It is the law of supply and demand at work here. Besides, we cannot expect prices to stay low forever.

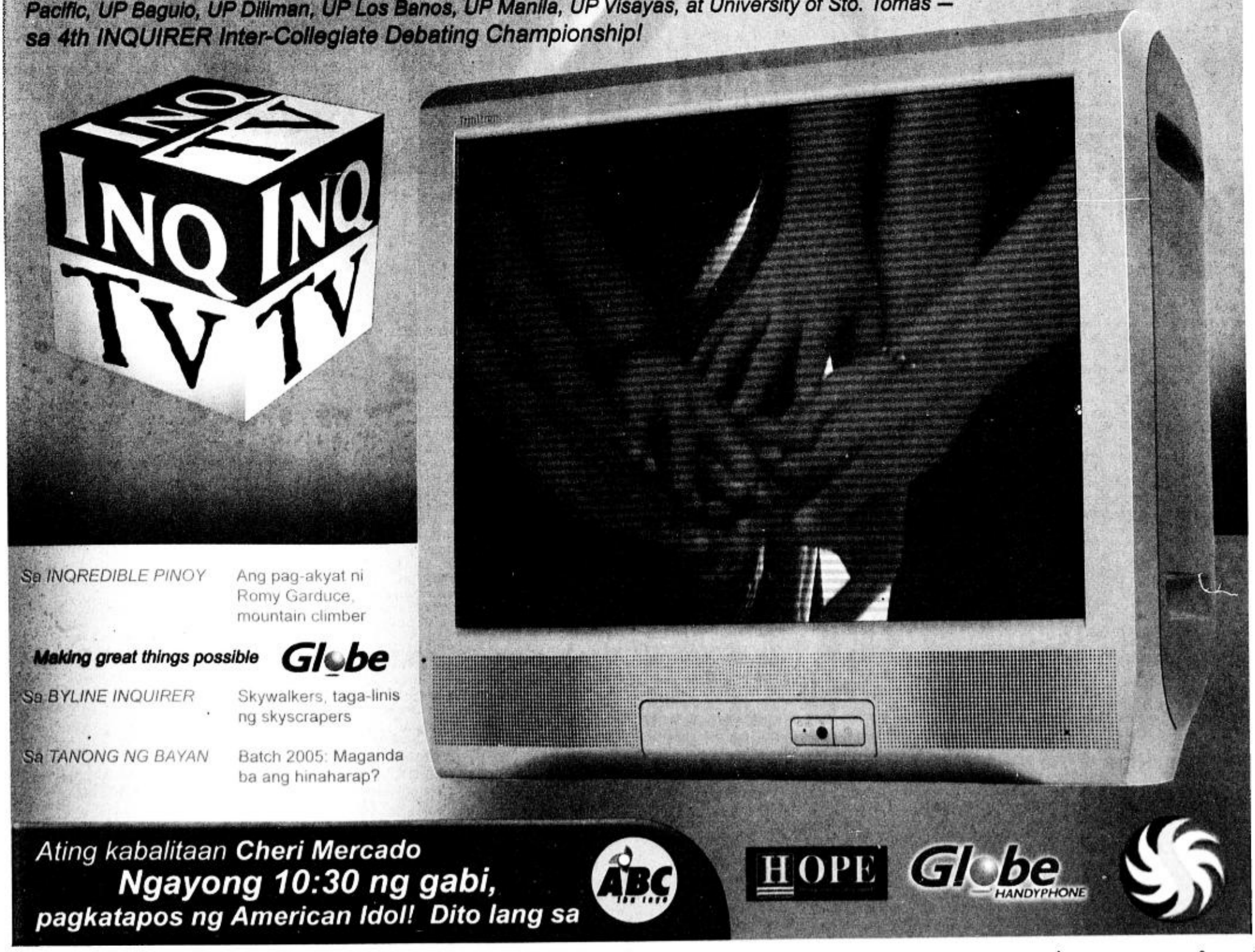
It's about time the government put its foot down and let the chips fall where they may. The reality is that the government has little say when it comes to upheavals in the prices of petroleum products.

Instead of going down on bended knees begging oil firms for lower prices—as it has been its habit—the government should start imploring its citizens to be more judicious and prudent in their use of fuel. Teach the people to bite the bullet and, maybe, they will learn a little lesson on thrift and frugality. After all, consumer protection also has its limits.

—ANTONIO PAGSIBIGAN,
412 Legaspi Suites,
Salcedo Street,
Legaspi Village, Makati City

WALANG SUSUKO! LAHAT PALABAN!

Ang kagilagilalas na pakipagsapalaran ng mga pinakasikat na debater — mula sa Ateneo de Manila University, Ateneo de Zamboanga University, College of St. Benilde, De La Salle University, Emilio Aguinaldo College, Lyceum, Manila Central University, Mariano Marcos State University, Mindanao State University, San Beda College, Siliman University, University of Asia and the Pacific, UP Baguio, UP Diliman, UP Los Banos, UP Manila, UP Visayas, at University of Sto. Tomas — sa 4th INQUIRER Inter-Collegiate Debating Championship!



United Architects of the Philippines

MESSAGES

Warmest felicitations to the United Architects of the Philippines (UAP) on your 31st National Convention.

For many years now, the UAP has advanced the welfare of our country's architects and raised the bar of excellence in the profession. This convention with the theme, "Opportunities Without Borders...An Exciting Time for the Filipino Architects," shows UAP's desire to help our architects take advantage of the exciting opportunities in their field.

Our efforts to reform the economy are being felt in all segments of our society, including the property and real estate sectors. We expect allied services such as construction and architecture to benefit from our efforts particularly in decentralizing development and fostering growth in the countryside. This convention is therefore most timely and will help our architects meet the growing demand for their services.

May your discussion on these developments, new architectural technologies and trends result in the betterment of the profession and contribute to the progress of our nation. I wish you a most successful and fruitful convention.

More power and mabuhay!

GLORIA MACAPAGAL-ARROYO

I extend my warmest greetings to the members of the United Architects of the Philippines (UAP) as they gather for the 31st UAP National Convention to held on March 31-April 2, 2005.

As you deliberate on the theme "Opportunities Without Borders...An Exciting Time for the Filipino Architects," I commend UAP for its conscious and dedicated effort to hone the skills, knowledge and experience of our architects. Evidently, the organization brings positive challenges and changes to the architectural profession.

I exhort the Association to abide by their mission to develop the architects' competence to make them at par with global standards. This you can do by holding events such as UAP CONEX 2005 that will inform them of the new technologies and trends in the construction industry. We need an integrated development strategy that is responsive to the global challenges we face today. It is my hope that your activities and projects will revitalize and coordinate energies towards the development of our country.

My wishes for the continued success of UAP's ever-growing community of architects. Let us consolidate our efforts as we all envision a better Philippines.

MABUHAY KAYONG LAHAT!

NOLI "KABAYAN" L. DE CASTRO

My warmest felicitations to the organizers and participants of the 31st National Convention of the United Architects of the Philippines on March 31- April 2, 2005.

As reflected in your theme," Opportunities Without Borders... An Exciting Time for the Filipino Architects," ours is an era where global changes open windows to great opportunity. I have an unwavering confidence in the capabilities of the Filipino Architect to ride the crest of the globalization wave because of his innate vision, creativity, versatility and the continuing redefinition of the Filipino aesthetic.

May you take on new challenges and add to the architectural wealth of the Philippines.

Mabuhay!

JOSE DE VENECIA
Speaker, House of Representatives

It is with great pleasure that I extend my warmest greetings to the officers and members of the United Architects of the Philippines (UAP) on the occasion of their 31st National Convention on March 31 to April 2, 2005 at the Philippines Trade and Training Center and Westin Philippine Plaza Hotel, Pasay City.

Your convention theme, "Opportunities Without Borders... An Exciting Time for the Filipino Architect," will also serve as inspiration to Filipino architects as they confront the challenge of going global.

With the convention being a forum of sharing knowledge and experiences, I salute the UAP in spearheading the effort and commitment to excellence in architecture by helping peers in the profession sharpen their skills and refresh their spirits. Against this backdrop, architects shall then continue to uphold and not compromise the ideals of their profession.

Just as architects can create wonders in the construction industry, DPWH works on the ground for nation's progress- working on the job that needs to be done in accordance with action-oriented plans vis-a-vis our strategic programs.

Together, let us beat the odds as we continue supporting the ten-point agenda of President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo that will surely pave the way for a stronger Philippine Republic. And as we continue building these infrastructure, we must also intensify our noble aim in uplifting the lives of the Filipino people.

Again, congratulations. Mabuhay kayong lahat.

HERMOGENES E. EBDANE, JR.
Acting Secretary, DPWH

Warmest Felicitations to the 31st National Convention of the United Architects of the Philippines!

For thirty-one years, the UAP has continually marched towards elevating the professional competence of its members. This occasion is yet another confirmation of such commitment as the architecture profession poses to conquer another milestone of challenges.

Opportunities Without Borders... An Exciting Time for the Filipino Architects," denotes a strong optimism and aggressive stance. Indeed, this is the opportunity where we can parade the comparative excellence and the highest technical and ethical competency of the Filipino architects.

May this conference, therefore, impart the desired skills and competency as we look forward to more shining moments for Filipino architects. With the concentrated efforts of the Commission and the UAP, we can confidently meet the future with dedicated, competent, ethical, and socially-responsible professional architects. More power and a fruitful convention to all!

LEONOR TRIPON-ROSERO
Chairman, Professional Regulations Commission

My warmest greetings to all the participants as well as all officers and members of the United Architects of the Philippines on the occasion of our 31st National Convention on March 30 to April 02, 2005 with the theme: "Opportunities Without Borders-Exciting Times for the Filipino Architects."

This year's National Convention reflects the futuristic bright scenarios of our profession and our professional organization with the passage of the Architecture Act of 2004 or RA 9266. It is uniquely designed with a well-rounded interesting segments and programs which will surely address the different professional and business interests of all participants.

Firstly, the Convention showcases the CONEX 2005 which will definitely allow suppliers, project owners, professionals and other businessmen, the venue to network and develop business opportunities.

Secondly, there will be technical lectures and seminars courtesy of our foreign and national speakers which are expected to apprise us of the knowledge, information and technology on the fast-growing tenets and trade in our professional practice.

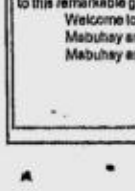
Thirdly, we have the Chapter President's Assembly, the National Board's Meeting, Elections of the Members of the National Board FY 2005-2006, the Investiture of New Fellows, General Assembly and the awarding of the Best Officers, Chapter and District Awards, among others. In short, it is one great event that will embellish the UAP annals and have paramount impact to all of us now and the years to come.

In behalf of the National Board, let me take this opportunity to express my heartfelt gratitude to all of you for your greater support and participation to the main thrusts and flagship projects of my administration, especially in campaigning and pushing of the implementation of RA 9266.

May the culmination of the 31st National Convention end with a resounding salvo and translate into true fulfillment, growth and jubilee to all of us, most especially now that we draw near to the closing of the fiscal year and the completion of our respective tour of duties.

Mabuhay ang UAP! Mabuhay tayong lahat!

ARCH. ENRIQUE O. OLONAN, FUAP
National President



"OPPORTUNITIES WITHOUT BORDERS... Exciting Times for the Filipino Architect" is a theme rooted out of our desire to be competitive in all directions. With the backing RA 9266, the law governing the practice of architecture in the Philippines, opportunities are now legally in place for registered architects in this country to move forward relentlessly.

Indeed, the so-called crisis in the Philippines can be transformed to our advantage provided architects responded to the challenges ahead of them with renewed vigor, enthusiasm, hope and the right attitude. Nuisance, impediments and limitations can be turned into opportunities.

Now is the best time to demonstrate our unified effort to make organization stronger, and be responsive to present and future calling. This is definitely an exciting time to challenge the direction of our professional practice for better. If approached properly, the opportunities presented to the Filipino architects are limitless and borderless. But behind these excitement, we must always ensure that our rights are protected and our integrity is preserved.

This Convention is never complete without the people who worked tirelessly behind the scene. I salute them for they are the backbone of our UAP organization. I am deeply honored and privileged to work with these exceptional architects.

To all the delegates and industry partners allow me to welcome you all to the 31st UAP National Convention.

Mabuhay kayong lahat!

ARCH. ROBERT M. MIRAFUENTE, UAP
Convention Director, 31st National Convention

Thirty years ago, the UAP launched its 1st ever National Convention held in the University of Santo Tomas. And while the numbers of architects expanded since its first gathering on December 7-13, 1975, so was the number of guests and generous exhibitors, our reliable partners in the industry.

As we celebrate our profession's 31st year of dynamic existence, the Commission with the consent and encouragement of the National Board finally decided to put our dreams into its actuality. This year, we would leap ahead and move the Convention to a more bigger venue, a larger number of participants, and the greatest quantity of exhibitors yet in the annals of the UAP to be gathered in one place.

Today, it is with great pride that I present to you the launching of the first-ever CONEX 2005, the biggest UAP Convention and Construction Exposition to be held side by side with the 31st National Convention. Beginning March 31 until April 3, the Filipino Architects and the general public will witness the largest gathering of exhibitors of the construction industry in the halls of the World Trade Center, coinciding with the lectures of prominent pool of speakers both foreign and local about the updates in the profession and its practice. I am confident that this convention will be more than incredible as it is definitely remarkable.

With this, my highest gratitude goes to my fellow architects in the National Board headed by National President Enrique Olonan for all their support and guidance bestowed to my commission, to all the accommodating and generous exhibitors who are always there for us, of course, to the most reliable, effective, efficient and passionate Organizing Committee officers and members of the 31st National Convention headed by Convention Director Robert Mirafuente, without whom all the achievements would not be achievable, and to all of my co-Filipino Architects from Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao who graced with their esteemed honor this momentous assemblage. It is with greatest elation that I welcome you all to this remarkable gathering of our country's integrated and Accredited Professional Organization.

Welcome to the 31st National Convention! My deepest gratitude to you all!

Mabuhay ang Arkitektong Filipino!

Mabuhay ang UAP!

ALEJANDRO O. CUA, FUAP
Executive Director, Commission on Conventions & Conferences

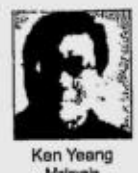
Together with its biggest trade expositions

CONEX 2005
UNITED ARCHITECTS OF THE PHILIPPINES CONVENTION EXHIBITS

Convention and Construction Expo

March 31 – April 3, 2005
World Trade Center, Manila, Philippines

SEMINAR SPEAKERS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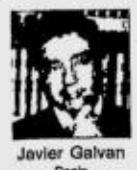
Malaysia

Philippe Madec
France

George Kunihiro
Japan

Syed Zaigham Jaffery
Pakistan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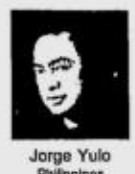
Spain

Marco Imperadori
Italy

Ong Tze Boon
Singapore

Francisco Mañosa
Philippines

Jose Pedro Recio
Philippines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Roxas Blvd., Pasay City
March 31 – April 2, 2005

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SCHEDULE OF ACTIVITIES

DAY 0 • 30 March 2005 • Wednesday

7:30 AM - 2:00 PM	**Registration** Westin Philippine Plaza, Pre-Function Lobby
8:00 AM - 1:00 PM	**Tri-Partite Network Meeting** Westin Philippine Plaza, Romblon / Mindoro
8:00 AM - 1:00 PM	**Chapter Presidents' Assembly** Westin Philippine Plaza, Leyte / Samar
12:00 NN - 1:00 PM	**Lunch** Westin Philippine Plaza, Visayas
1:00 PM - 4:00 PM	**Chapter Secretaries' & Treasurers' Assembly** Westin Philippine Plaza, Leyte / Samar
1:00 PM - 4:00 PM	**CODHASP Meeting** Westin Philippine Plaza, Romblon / Mindoro
5:00 PM - 9:00 PM	**National Board Meeting** Westin Philippine Plaza, Davao

DAY 1 • 31 March 2005 • Thursday

7:30 AM - 4:00 PM	**Registration** Philippine Trade Training Center, Lobby
8:00 AM - 8:45 AM	**Ecumenical Mass** World Trade Center, Lobby
9:00 AM - 10:30 AM	**Opening of Convention Exhibits** World Trade Center, Lobby
10:30 AM - 11:00 AM	**Seating of Delegates** Philippine Trade Training Center, Halls A & B
11:00 AM - 12:00 NN	**Opening Ceremonies** Philippine Trade Training Center, Halls A & B
12:00 NN - 1:00 PM	**Lunch & Candidates' Forum** Philippine Trade Training Center, Halls A & B
1:30 PM - 5:30 PM	**Seminars, Module 1** Philippine Trade Training Center, Hall C
1:30 PM - 5:30 PM	**SIACAD Training Module** Philippine Trade Training Center, Function Room D
6:00 PM - 7:00 PM	**Book Launching & Signing w/ Cocktails** Philippine Trade Training Center, Lobby
7:00 PM - 12:00 MN	**Welcome Dinner - *"Party by the Boulevard"*** Philippine Trade Training Center, Halls A, B & C

DAY 2 • 01 April 2005 • Friday

8:00 AM - 5:00 PM	**Registration** Philippine Trade Training Center, Lobby
8:00 AM - 4:00 PM	**Elections** Philippine Trade Training Center, Function Room B
8:00 AM - 5:30 PM	**Seminars, Modules 2 & 3** Philippine Trade Training Center, Hall C
8:00 AM - 5:30 PM	**SIACAD Training Module** Philippine Trade Training Center, Function Room D
12:00 NN - 1:00 PM	**Lunch Symposium with ARCASIA** Philippine Trade Training Center, Halls A & B
2:00 PM - 5:00 PM	**Convocation of Fellows** Westin Philippine Plaza, Romblon / Mindoro
5:00 PM - 6:30 PM	**Investiture of Fellows** Westin Philippine Plaza, Romblon / Mindoro
7:00 PM - 10:30 PM	**Honor Dinner, Presentation of New Fellows, LIKHA Award & Awarding of Best Chapters** Westin Philippine Plaza, Grand Ballroom

DAY 3 • 02 April 2005 • Saturday

8:00 AM - 10:00 AM	**Breakfast Meeting, College of Fellows** Westin Philippine Plaza, Romblon / Mindoro
8:00 AM - 10:30 AM	**Seminars, Module 4** Philippine Trade Training Center, Hall C
8:00 AM - 10:30 AM	**SIACAD Training Module** Westin Philippine Plaza, Romblon / Mindoro
10:30 AM - 3:00 PM	**General Assembly & Annual Business Meeting, Proclamation of Election Winners Awarding & Closing Ceremonies Video Presentation by Center for Filipino Architecture** Philippine Trade Training Center, Halls A & B
3:00 PM - 5:00 PM	**Free Time**
5:00 PM - 6:00 PM	**Thanksgiving Mass** Philippine Trade Training Center, Function Room D
7:00 PM - 12:00 MN	**Fellowship Night - "Grease Lightning"** Westin Philippine Plaza, Grand Ballroom

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National Board Meeting
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Chapter Treasurer's Assembly/ Convocation of Fellows and Investiture
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INQUIRER Southern Luzon

Editor Jun Bandayrel
Bureau Chief Floreño G. Solmirano

RP's oldest priest not ready to retire

FR. Quirino "Lolo" Glorioso, 102, advises priests and seminarians to live simply and believe in the power of constant prayer in response to a tribute given to him by alumni of the Seminario de San Jose in Manila. ROMULO O. PONTE

By Romulo Ponte
San Pablo City

THE OLDEST actively functioning priest in the country—and perhaps, throughout the world—has not given any gesture that he is retiring from his ministerial job, even as he turns 102 years old today.

And to pay tribute to Fr. Quirino "Lolo" G. Glorioso, the Diocese of San Pablo in Laguna will hold an Easter pilgrimage celebration called the "Glorious Caravan."

The event also marks the 73rd anniversary of the ordination of Glorioso, whom Msgr. Jerry V. Bitoon, vicar general of the diocese, describes as "a jewel of the Philippine clergy."

"In every church we visit, we will do a particular norm of piety that has been punctuating his day-to-day life since he became a priest 73 years ago. You will, therefore, have a glimpse of how his day unfolds and, hopefully, uncover the secret of his phenomenal longevity or, better still, sanctity," said Bitoon, who is also the priest's caregiver.

No indication of resting

"The man has not yet given any indication that he will soon be resting, really resting ... I give up. I doubt whether I can equal his age or even reach 100," said Msgr. Sabino A. Vengco Jr., a theologian and head of the Kadiwa sa Pagkapari Foundation Inc. (KPFI) or Ephesus Center. The foundation takes care of elderly priests in the country.

Glorioso is "not only part of the heritage of our local Church but also a veritable national treasure," Vengco said.

Another centenarian priest in the Philippines is 101-year-old Msgr. Ildefonso Odi of Antique, whose mobility depends completely on a wheelchair. He can no longer say Mass, Vengco said.

He said he was impressed when he visited Glorioso in his quarters in San Pablo. The priest was still climbing up and down the stairs all by himself, saying Mass daily at the cathedral, visiting the sick, and doing other regular priestly work.

"Father Glorioso, while standing up the whole time, discussed with me recent developments at the Vatican and other world events. I was impressed with him that on our way home I told my Ephesus co-workers that I intend to reach and equal that age and the corresponding mental alertness of Father Glorioso. That was 11 years ago," Vengco said.

Father Lolo, at that time, was also traveling alone to Manila and back, to visit friends and relatives.

Even when he was 90 years old, he was already a phenomenon, Vengco said.

Man of prayer

The power of constant prayer is his source of strength, Glorioso had earlier said. He admitted to having had to face trials in the past, but he considered these challenges that enabled him to retain his moral and spiritual regimen.

"Temptations made me strong ... prayer and devotion to the Blessed Sacrament are my daily sources of strength," he said.

Vengco said he had even witnessed the old priest travel to as far as the National Shrine of the Divine Mercy in Marilao, Bulacan, just to pray.

Glorioso was kneeling inside the shrine, the monsignor recalled. "I hurried up to him, kneeling there. I asked him a question, which managed to sound stupid as soon as I uttered it, 'Father Glorioso, *ano po ang ginagawa ninyo rito*? (What are you doing here?)' He answered, '*Nagdarasal po*' (Praying).

"And in his Southern Tagalog polite manners, he explained (his purpose)," Vengco said. "*Ako po'y nanghihina kapag hindi ako nagdarasal dito* (I feel weak when I do not pray here)."

Vengco later found that Glorioso had been a generous supporter of the shrine.

"The old priest always finds time and even financial help for the shrine in the form of bundle love offering envelopes," he said. "This old priest does not excuse himself from helping the projects of other priests.

"But above all, here is a priest who prays. And he is willing to travel far in order to pray," he said.

Studies

Glorioso studied first at the Colegio de San Jose, which became the Seminario de San Jose on Padre Faura Street in Manila after a few months.

He was one of the first 12 seminarians of San Jose where he stayed for 12 months. He majored in English and Literature and was conferred a Bachelor of Arts degree.

Glorioso said he kept his Josefino spirit and traits very dearly. Most particularly, he lived up to the discipline taught in the seminary concerning "meditation, examination of conscience, Mass, confession."

These are some of the things that he learned which, he said, he has been doing until now.

Glorioso was ordained priest on March 28, 1932 in the Cathedral of Lipa in Batangas.

He could no longer recall the name of the bishop who ordained him. But he said that among the bishops who became his superiors were an archbishop he identified only as a native of Vigan, Ilocos Norte (deceased); Archbishops Alfredo Obviar and Olalia (both deceased), and Bishops Pedro N. Bantigue (retired), Francisco C. San Diego, and Leo M. Drona.

He was briefly assigned as assistant parish priest in the cathedral and requested from time to time to say Mass at Mataas na Kahoy in Batangas.

The next series of assignments saw the young priest crisscrossing nine different parishes within 10 years of priesthood, even at the height of a fierce battle during World War II. This meant that the priest stayed only for one year or less in any parish during his first 10 years in the ministry.

From his brief assignment in the cathedral, Glorioso was transferred to the parish in Atimonan, Quezon, as administrator. He moved to the island parish of Alabat, Quezon, where he became parish priest for the first time.

He was then sent to the nearby parish in Quezon town as resident priest.

His secret for longevity? He just eats just any kind of food, Glorioso said in an earlier interview.

"But I eat in moderation: No liquor, no fat meat, etc. ... Control your appetite, but eat well," he advised.

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Cebu rejects GMA's 4-day workweek

By Jhunnex Napallacan
PDI Visayas Bureau

CEBU CITY—The provincial government and the different municipal governments in Cebu will not adopt the four-day workweek scheme which will be implemented next week by national government agencies.

Business leaders in Cebu also rejected the work scheme, calling it impractical.

Gov. Gwendolyn Garcia said she has no plan to adopt the shorter workweek because she believed that local government units should even work seven days a week in order to serve their constituents.

"As far as I'm concerned, the delivery of basic services (is) a 24-hour, seven-day job. I would rather continue with the present five-day workweek," Garcia said.

Garcia added that with many functions of the national government agencies already devolved to local governments, LGUs must give more time in delivering the basic services and attending to the people's problems.

The governor, however, said she would give municipal mayors a free hand in deciding if they would want to adopt the four-day workweek.

But Dalaguete Mayor Ronald Alan Cesante, Cebu Municipal Mayors League (CMML) president, said they preferred to proceed with their usual work scheme, saying he feared that the delivery of basic services would suffer if they would adopt the shorter workweek.

Robert Go, Cebu Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCCI) president, said the four-day workweek would not be practical and may only result in inefficiency of workers who would be required to work 10 hours a day.

Go said that productivity surveys have shown that a worker's optimum efficiency occurs during the first four hours at work and drops after that.

Go added that private businesses could also be placed at a disadvantage as there would be instances when transactions with government offices had to be done on a Friday, during which offices would be closed under the four-day workweek.

Liza Padilla, Department of Budget and Management officer-in-charge; Eduardo Lecciones, agriculture regional director; and Civil Service Commission regional director David Cabanag said in separate interviews that they were still waiting for guidelines from their central offices to comply with Administrative Order No. 32, signed by President Macapagal-Arroyo last week.

EO 32 shortens the workweek from April to May to allow the government to save P144 million in electricity and gas consumption.

This early, however, Cabanag said the division chiefs in his office feared that they could not meet their targets under the four-day workweek scheme, even if they worked two more hours each working day.

Security tight on Boracay for IPU

By Nestor Burgos Jr.
PDI Visayas Bureau

ILOILO CITY—Security has been tightened on the island-resort of Boracay in preparation for the arrival next week of delegates to the 112th Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU).

More policemen, additional posts, and increased police visibility were among the measures that would be taken against terrorist threats, said Chief Insp. Jack Wanky, chief of the Boracay Special Protection Unit (BSPU).

Boracay, one of the country's premier tourist destination, is one of the areas that the delegates are expected to visit. This is expected to boost the earnings of more than 200 hotels, restaurants and resorts on the island.

Some 1,500 parliamentarians are expected to attend the assembly on April 3-8 at the Philippine International Convention Center. The foreign lawmakers have started arriving last week.

Limited access

Wanky said starting April 1, access to Boracay would be limited to the newly constructed Cagbang jetty port at the southern end of the 1,083-hectare island.

Currently, motorized outriggers carrying passengers and cargo, and other vessels, dock in three boat stations along the five-kilometer white beach. Vessels could also dock on the other side of the island opposite the white beach.

Wanky said this policy would make it easier for security personnel to monitor and inspect persons and cargo arriving on the island. He said around 500 to 700 delegates and their families were expected to visit the island between April 5-8.

More troops

More policemen and soldiers will be sent to the island, including 150 fresh graduates of the Scout Ranger Course, from the police regional command in Iloilo City.

The policemen will be supported by the Task Force Boracay, an inter-agency unit composed of the police, Army, Coast Guard, Navy and Maritime Group.

Wanky said they would also put more observation posts around the island to monitor the delegates and other visitors who have flocked to the island since the Holy Week.

Rising number of TB cases in Cordillera alarms doctors

BAGUIO CITY—The increasing number of tuberculosis cases in the Cordillera is more alarming than meningococcemia that struck this city late last year, according to the Department of Health regional office here.

"There are more cases of tuberculosis than meningococcemia but we just fail to notice it," said Dr. Ruel Revilla, pulmonologist of the Saint Louis University Hospital of the Sacred Heart.

Dr. Antonio Bautista, head of the infectious disease unit of DOH-Cordillera, said tuberculosis cases in the region totaled 1,582 in 2004 while 71 meningococcemia cases were recorded from September last year to March.

Abra has the most TB cases at 329; Kalinga, 270; Benguet, 248; Mt. Province, 198; Baguio City, 197; Ifugao, 196; and Apayao, 144.

A total of 1.8 million people worldwide die of tuberculosis every year. In the Philippines, 75 Filipinos die of the disease everyday.

Organizers of a new campaign , called "TB DOTS in the Workforce," said in a statement that at least 100,000 new TB cases are diagnosed annually.

DOTS is Directly Observed Treatment Short-course, recommended by the Department of Health and the WHO.

A briefing is set for Mindanao executives April 1, 2005 at the Grand Men Seng Hotel. Firms backing the campaign would be recognized—Central Azucarera Don Pedro Inc., Toyota Motor Phils., American Standard and Aboitiz Transport System Corp. *Desiree Caluza, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

Health exec says critics helping birth control plan

By Joey A. Gabieta
PDI Visayas Bureau

TACLOBAN CITY—The top health official here said that opposition to the Ligtas Buntis campaign has actually worked in its favor as it created public awareness, particularly among the campaign's target clients.

Milagros Bacus, Department of Health chief in Eastern Visayas, said she welcomes opposition to the latest controversial campaign of the department.

"I am happy with the controversy that the program has generated as it created awareness among our people. This is a welcome thing," said Milagros Bacus, Department of Health chief in Eastern Visayas (DOH 8).

Archbishop Pedro Dean, of the Palo Diocese in Leyte and who has been leading the Catholic Church's campaign against the Ligtas Buntis program in the region, had called the campaign "immoral" and "an act of evil."

Ally

The project's critics have also found an ally in Ligaya Acosta, the former information officer of DOH 8, who resigned on Feb. 28 because she disagreed with the campaign.

Acosta had said the campaign would result in promiscuity among young adults and promote abortion.

Bacus, however, said she remain unfazed by the strong adverse reaction coming from the Church and Acosta.

"It worked in our favor. It made the people realize that there is this particular campaign by the department and, in fact, many of them have accepted the program," she said.

Citing as an example, Bacus claimed that in one target area in Samar, the number of people who accept artificial birth control methods was only 81 last year. But boosted by the controversy, "our team was able to have 61 (people who accept the program) in just a few days."

But Bacus said that while Ligtas Buntis openly campaigns for artificial methods of birth control, they were also promoting with the same intensity natural birth control methods that the Catholic Church endorses.

Side effects

Bacus said she laments that while the DOH promotes artificial and natural family planning methods, the likes of Acosta only "highlight" the side effects traced to the use of artificial birth control methods.

"I don't really care if they oppose the program but at least they should have balanced information . . . and by balanced information, it means that both advantages and disadvantages are given to the client," she said.

In Eastern Visayas, the DOH targets about 490,000 pregnant women and persons of reproductive age in the cities of Tacloban and Ormoc (both in Leyte province), Maasin (Southern Leyte) and Calbayog (Samar); and the towns of Borongan (Eastern Samar), Catarman (Northern Samar), Catbalogan (Samar) and Baybay (Leyte).

At least P600,000 was allotted by the DOH for an information drive in the region for the campaign.

ROADS, TRAM IN CORDILLERA

GMA gives boost to anti-marijuana bid

By Donna Demetillo
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

BAGUIO CITY—The police campaign to stop the flourishing marijuana trade in the Cordillera got a boost after President Macapagal-Arroyo announced plans to build farm-to-market roads or cable cars in two Benguet towns to help wean away farmers from marijuana and transport their other produce.

The President said here last week that she favored the use of P88 million in funds intended for the Baguio General Hospital flyover project here for farm-to-market roads in Kapangan town and tramlines in Tinglayan town.

Kapangan Mayor Rogelio Leon said he was optimistic that farmers would refrain from planting marijuana once the farm-to-market roads or cable cars are put up.

Unstable market prices and difficulty in carrying farm produce, such as potatoes and carrots, through mountain trails have been identified as the culprit behind the flourishing marijuana trade in the Cordillera, especially in Kapangan town.

Farmers prefer planting marijuana largely because it is highly resistant to diseases and pests. Planting marijuana, a weed, costs less than planting other crops because there is no longer a need for pesticides.

Planters, therefore, end up earning more profits from planting marijuana than from planting traditional crops.

In Kapangan, about 250,000 marijuana plants, worth P50 million, are produced annually. Reports showed that seven remote sitios in four Kapangan barangays are deep in the cultivation of marijuana. These are Laoangan, Copias, Alem, Liteng, Toplak, Tadayaw, and Tawang.

These areas are remote and inaccessible, making it difficult for police to monitor the marijuana plantations, much more to stop the cultivation of the banned substance.

Because of this, the marijuana trade has taken root in Kapangan despite efforts of the Benguet police to stop it.

The immediate response of the regional peace and order council was to come up with an Economic Development Package (EDP), a multi-sectoral effort for goods and services to reach remote communities, especially those that are engaged in the illegal trade.

Projects under the EDP include infrastructure, livelihood, land tenure, information and education campaign, and law enforcement. Infrastructure will answer the demand for farm-to-market roads as well as irrigation in the hope that farmers will eventually shift to planting other crops and find other means of livelihood.

The government is also offering alternative livelihood such as anthurium production, apiculture or beekeeping, sericulture or cocoon production, goat raising, and rice-fish culture.

To sustain these projects, the government will provide education and training, and cash incentives for the highest quality and quantity of produce.

HOT TIMES BING GONZALES/PDI MINDANAO BUREAU
A performer from the Indonesian consulate plays with fire during the recent celebration of Davao City's founding anniversary.

Reef facing extinction due to crown of thorns

BULAN, Sorsogon—Six to seven hectares of a coral reef that is home to the world's largest manta rays are facing extinction if authorities do not move fast.

A large colony of crowns of thorns, a kind of starfish, had invaded the Tacdugan Reef, 13 km off the coast of this town.

Serafin Lacdang, head of the fishery department of the Office of the Provincial Agriculturist, said the crowns of thorns has been eating the polyps out of the corals and a big part of the reef is already bleaching, indicating that it is already dead.

Lacdang said the death of the corals would cut the food chain in the reef and endanger the plankton-eating manta rays.

The area is considered by divers as a haven for the giant rays.

Manta rays are gentle sea creatures tolerant of humans but dangerous when threatened. They use their wings to seize enemies and squeeze them to death.

An adult ray could reach 5.8 meters long and weigh up to 2,000 kilograms.

It is declared an endangered species and its catching is prohibited by law.

Lacdang said the situation calls for immediate action to save the reef and with it, the mantas.

The crown of thorns multiplies by the hundreds and could cover the entire area in a few months.

The damaged corals could no longer be rehabilitated, Lacdang said.

The crown of thorns reaches about 60 cm in diameter and has 23 arms covered with strong, sharp spines.

A female produces up to 100 million eggs in one spawning and could live up to three years.

A group led by Sorsogon City Councilor Dave Duran and Lacdang launched moves to save the Tacdugan Reef.

Duran, a diving enthusiast, said they would try to convene a meeting of all government agencies and local governments for help.

Lacdang, however, said the reefs are outside the territorial waters of Sorsogon. It is in the jurisdiction of San Jacinto, Masbate.

"We just want to help save the reef," Lacdang said. *Bobby Labalan, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

ROUNDUP

Organic fertilizer backed

CITY OF CALAPAN—An agriculture firm has encouraged the use of more organic fertilizers to reduce dependence on expensive chemical fertilizers. Junie Mejico, official of the Mindoro Agri-Research Biotechnology Corp., said the use of both organic fertilizers and certain chemicals produces an enzyme or protein that helps increase microorganisms in soil by the millions. These enzymes, he said, help remove the soil's acidity and restores its health. ***Madonna Virola, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau***

Retarded person missing

RIZAL, Laguna—Police reported that a mentally impaired male resident here had been missing since March 21. His relatives have tried in vain to locate Joseph Conservado, 30, of Barangay Pook. Conservado left his residence at about 9:50 a.m. on March 21 and has not returned home since. The man has curly black hair and was last seen wearing white dotted T-shirt with collar, *maong* pants. Anyone who finds Conservado is requested to contact the Rizal Municipal Police Office.
Romulo Ponte, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

4 nabbed for illegal drugs

STA. CRUZ, Laguna—Police arrested four suspects involved in illegal drugs in separate operations last week in three towns. Reports reaching the office of Laguna police director Senior Supt. Jaime Calungsod Jr. identified the suspects as Cynthia Macalagay of Barangay Magdapyo, Pagsanjan, Laguna; Michael Mercado, 31, of Barangay Concepcion, Lumban town; Inaki Prats, 23, of Barangay Tagapo, Sta. Rosa City; and Edwin Ritual, 29, of Barangay Mendiola, Siniloan. Police have filed cases against the suspects in court. ***Romulo Ponte, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau***

Caution on kite-flying

CITY OF CALAPAN—The medical officer of the Oriental Mindoro Provincial Hospital, has warned kite flyers here against flying their kites near electric wires. The warning came after Ronaldo Llanes, 7, a resident of Pinamalayan town, suffered burns in 30 percent of his body after the tail string of his kite, which was made of copper, accidentally touched a high-tension wire on March 12. He has been discharged but his wounds were still being treated at the hospital. Kite-flying is popular here these days. ***Madonna Virola, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau***

12 NPA rebs yield

CITY OF CALAPAN—Twelve New People's Army members surrendered on Good Friday at the Oriental Mindoro Provincial Police Office (OMPPO) in Camp Gen. Efigenio Navarro in Barangay Suqui here, according to a police report. Insp. Crizalde Conde, chief of police of Roxas town, identified those who surrendered as Rene "Ka Art" Aguinaldo; Recto "Ka Ronie/Renan" de los Santos; Ludy "Ka Mario" Casidsid; Richard "Ka Al" Manalon; Eduardo "Ka Bert" Melchor; Amador "Ka Er" Gabayno; Remuel "Ka Jess" Manalon; Romy "Ka Carding" Malanaw; Muniag "Ka Banong" Malanaw; Rudy "Ka Eric" Casidsid; Onte "Ka Rodel" Luna, and Bongbong "Ka Benben" Malanaw. Conde said the surrender of the 12 came after two months of negotiations. Initial police investigation showed that 10 of the surrenderees are farmers, one is laborer and another is a fisherman. The alleged NPA rebels said they wished to go back to normal life.
Madonna Virola, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

Mayor appeals for help to raise ₱600M for Tacloban airport

By Joey A. Gabieta
PDI Visayas Bureau

TACLOBAN CITY—Mayor Alfredo "Bejo" Romualdez has appealed to government and business leaders in Eastern Visayas to help him raise the P600 million in counterpart fund needed for the modernization of the Daniel Z. Romualdez (DZR) Airport.

The project has been given the go-signal for funding, worth P1.3 billion, by the Japanese Bank for International Cooperation (JBIC) but the Philippine government is required to put up a P600 million counterpart fund, money that the cash-strapped national government could not provide.

Romualdez said while he understood the predicament of the national government, "the project itself could not wait."

"(That) is why I would like to appeal to all our congressmen and governors to help us out on this matter. Perhaps they could chip in some of their funds so that we can proceed with the project," Romualdez said.

The mayor said congressmen and governors in the region might be persuaded to part with some of their funds as the airport's services are not only being enjoyed by the people of this city but by the entire region.

Romualdez said the region's 12 congressmen could help him by sharing their pork barrels to raise the P600 million. A congressman is each entitled to P40 million in pork barrel.

He also issued the same appeal to all six governors of the region for them to share local funds to raise the needed amount.

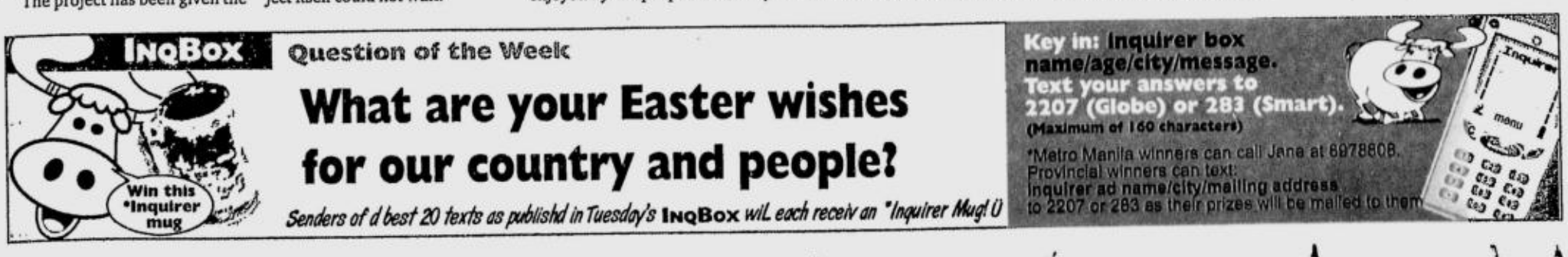
"I think we can do it if all of our leaders (in the region) will contribute to this effort," he said.

The region's biggest airport, named after the city mayor's uncle, is in San Jose District. Its modernization plan includes a modern terminal building and a bigger runway.

During her visit to the city on Feb. 28, President Arroyo informed Romualdez of her decision to scrap the planned modernization and rehabilitation of the DZR Airport due to lack of funds.

This early, however, some legislators said they found it difficult to heed the mayor's appeal.

Rep. Remedios Petilla, former governor of the province, said the needed amount was simply "too big" and it would be difficult for congressmen to give up all their pork barrel funds for the airport since they have other projects already lined up.



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Motorcycle 'solo taxi' gearing to hit streets

By Ronnel W. Domingo

A GROUP of local motorcycle makers is talking to the Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board (LTFRB) about its plan to revive the "solo taxi," patterned after the two-wheeled cabbies of Thailand.

Rolando F. Cruz, president of the Motorcycle Development Program Participants Association (MDPPA), said in an interview that the group wanted to relaunch the solo taxi this year to promote the use of bikes as a mode of public transportation amid worsening traffic congestion in cities.

SM-Mandaluyong route

The solo taxi was first launched in Metro Manila in 2001 and plied the Mandaluyong City Hall-SM Megamall route for about a year.

"We had 40 units back then," Cruz recalled. "The MDPPA members supplied the bikes."

Founded in 1973, the MDPPA groups Kawasaki Motors Corp., Honda Philippines Inc., Suzuki Philippines Inc., Kymco Pilipinas Inc., Norkis Trading Co. Inc. (Yamaha), Victoria Motors (Loncin) and East World Motor Ind., Corp. (Motor Star).

He said the project was stopped because it was limited to the single franchise that the group was able to secure from the LTFRB.

"(It was inevitable that) passengers began asking to be taken off-route, but this resulted in our drivers being apprehended and fined for violation of our franchise," Cruz said.

Cruz, who is also general manager of Suzuki Philippines Inc., said the MDPPA was trying to secure more franchises with LTFRB to make the solo taxi viable.

"This time, we want to operate the solo taxi nationwide but initially in more areas in Metro Manila," he said.

Even in the provinces

Cruz said the group was also planning to introduce the concept in Baliuag, Bulacan, and the cities of Cabanatuan (Nueva Ecija), Cebu and Davao. "We would expand to other areas as we see fit."

He said that despite the limited operation of the solo taxi four years ago, commuters showed a fairly significant acceptance level for the idea. "Even women and office girls patronized it."

Cruz said the solo taxi's concept took off from its counterpart in Thailand. The difference was that the local bike taxi was enhanced with wider food rests and a back rest for the passenger's convenience.

The MDPPA chief added that drivers would also be provided with uniforms and trained to be courteous.

Earlier, the MDPPA said it was embarking on a campaign to boost bike sales for solo use as the tricycle segment seemed to have reached a plateau.

Data from the group show that the local motorcycle market is projected to expand to 650,000 units this year and to a million units by 2008.

Pink fences in Cubao to become permanent

By Tarra V. Quismundo

FROM pink fences to fixed fences.

Since they have been proven effective in putting buses in their proper place, pink fences put up by the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA) in Cubao six months ago will soon be made permanent, said Angelito Vergel de Dios, Traffic Operations Center executive director.

He was referring to fences on Edsa's northbound service road fronting Farmer's Plaza.

"I don't know why some are critical of pink fences in front of Camp Crame, but they don't see how the fences in Cubao have worked," said Vergel de Dios.

The MMDA has been receiving complaints about the pink fences on the southbound lane of Edsa from Camp Crame to Ortigas.

The traffic chief said the MMDA was set to fix into place the steel barriers in Cubao.

This portion, which is beneath the Cubao Station of the Metro Rail Transit, was among the first places on Edsa to be fenced up by the MMDA to separate bus lanes from the other lanes to ease traffic.

Vergel de Dios said the pink fences would be cemented in place to prevent them from being toppled.

Roadwork may begin next week at the earliest, he said, adding that work would be done at night so as not to impede vehicular flow.

This fenced up portion was also the first part of Edsa to host mid-road loading platforms, barriers that prevent buses from switching lanes.

"The platforms separated the buses bound for Monumento from those going to Fairview. So even passengers were segregated," said Vergel de Dios.

The buses were confined to their designated lanes, which prevented them from choking traffic on other lanes, he added.

Traffic rerouted for IPU

By Jocelyn R. Uy

WITH THE 112th Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) General Assembly only three days away, the Philippine National Police Traffic Enforcement Group (TEG) has implemented its traffic rerouting plan at 6 a.m. today.

Around 2,000 parliamentarians are expected to attend the general assembly at the Philippine International Convention Center from April 3 to 8.

Motorists coming from the north and south of Roxas Boulevard headed to the Boom na Boom, Star City, Aliw Theater and DZrh station would have to take the Roxas Boulevard-Sen. Gil Puyat (Buendia) intersection, turn right on Buendia Extension-Magdalena Jalandoni Street, then right on Vicente Sotto Street using the right lane portion of the road, and exit at Roxas Boulevard.

Those bound for the Asean Garden, Liwasang Agyu, CCP Bay Terminal, CCP Cycle Ring, Folk Arts Theater and Gloria Maris at the PICC area, coming from north or south of Roxas Boulevard, are advised to take the Pablo Ocampo Sr.-Pedro Bukaneg intersection.

The Special Task Group Daloy, composed of about 1,000 traffic personnel, would be deployed in major thoroughfares like the Ninoy Aquino International Road, Edsa, Roxas Boulevard and President Diosdado Macapagal Avenue to ensure the smooth flow of traffic. They will also be posted in 19 hotels in the cities of Makati, Pasay, and Manila where the delegates are billeted.

The Manila government, host city of the affair, has spruced up city streets in preparation for the red carpet reception of 1,500 visiting lawmakers from all over the world.

"The presence of respected leaders from different countries in Manila will definitely erase all adverse advisories issued by their governments about our country," Mayor Lito Atienza said.

The Western Police District (WPD) has also ordered the deployment of hundreds of *sekretas* or plainclothes policemen near souvenir shops and restaurants in Manila to protect dignitaries on organized tours during their free time.

At the Ninoy Aquino International Airport yesterday, the Shadow Rondalla, with five blind musicians as members, opened their six-day stint at the terminal by welcoming arriving delegates with a repertoire of Filipino songs.

The all-male group has been playing at the Duty Free Philippines since it was established 20 years ago. ***With Tina G. Santos, Margaux C. Ortiz, Nikko Dizon***

Rock star Avril Lavigne disappoints fans at Naia

By Nikko Dizon

SHE SURE is complicated.

Rock star Avril Lavigne disappointed her fans yesterday when she snubbed them upon arriving at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport (Naia).

Lavigne is set to have a concert tonight at The Fort in Taguig City with the rock group, A Simple Plan.

Airport employees, along with their children, gathered at the east arrival concourse to welcome Lavigne but they got neither a wave nor a smile from the blonde singer, described in the MTV website as a "rock and roll wild child".

The 20-year-old Lavigne emerged from the concourse clad in a black sleeveless shirt and black pants. She hid her face with a black bull cap as she carried a bouquet from an airport employee. Her bodyguards also shielded the diminutive singer and shoved photojournalists away.

INQUIRER photographer Rudy Esperas sustained a six-inch wound when a bodyguard's watch abraded his right arm. Esperas dropped his camera filter as a result.

Melanie Giron said her sister managed to have a CD of Lavigne's album autographed but they were also pushed away and nearly fell to the floor.

"We heard the bodyguards say 'Go away' as they pushed us. We think the tight security they were giving her was exaggerated," the sisters told reporters after Lavigne's white limousine sped off.

SINGER Avril Lavigne with an unidentified escort. RUDY ESPERAS

With her signature dark makeup, Lavigne shot to fame in 2002 with her debut single "Complicated", which dealt with teenage angst.

Around 295 policemen from the Southern Police District would provide security for the concert tonight, said Taguig City police chief Supt. Ramon Reyes.

"It is safe to go there," Reyes told the INQUIRER yesterday. The police also carried out a walk-through yesterday of the venue at the Bonifacio Global City Open Field, he added. Apart from the police, firemen and ambulances would be on standby tomorrow night. Civilian cops provided by the promoters of the concert would also augment the police force. "There will also be sniffing dogs during the concert," he said, adding that the police would also conduct bag and body inspections. *With Jocelyn R. Uy*

Non-existent jobs offered to Austrians

By Volt Contreras

TALK of role reversals. This time, foreigners had been apparently duped into applying for jobs in the Philippines.

The Department of Foreign Affairs yesterday said the Philippine Embassy in Vienna had received complaints from Austrian citizens who claimed they were offered non-existent jobs in Manila.

DFA spokesperson Gilberto Asuque said the agency had alerted the National Bureau of Investigation on this bogus recruiter who sends out "advertisements" by email from somewhere in Paranaque City.

Among the fraudulent ads that lured the Austrians, he said, were offers for jobs in resorts and hotels in Puerto Princesa, Palawan.

Asuque declined to identify the job agency pending further investigation by the NBI. The matter was also referred to the Presidential Anti-Illegal Recruitment Task Force headed by police captain Reynaldo Jaylo.

Philippine Ambassador to Vienna Victor Garcia said the recruiter would first invite applicants to come to Manila for the job interview. The jobseekers are then asked to transfer funds "in advance to cover the cost of air travel and the processing of travel papers. But no air tickets are issued and because the companies are non-existent and are merely masquerading as legitimate operators, the funds are never recovered " said the DFA, quoting Garcia.

Marikina tears down, opens Tumana gate

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

THE MARIKINA City government has torn down the gate of a private subdivision to allow motorists use of an alternative route going to Quezon City.

"It is open now. It is a public road and they [subdivision owners] are obstructing traffic," Marikina City Mayor Marides Fernando told the INQUIRER yesterday.

The city government forcibly opened the Tumana Gate of the Loyola Grand Villas Subdivision the other afternoon, almost two weeks after the private operator closed it to motorists.

It is not the end of the conflict, however.

To be closed again

"We will close the gate again," said Annie Santiago, executive assistant to the president of Soliven Group of Companies, the subdivision's developer.

Maintaining that the gate was part of private property, she said their lawyers would be meeting today to discuss the matter.

The developer closed the gate on March 19, saying the city failed to fulfill a commitment to remove illegal settlers from parts of the subdivision.

Sought for comment, city officials admitted having difficulty removing the illegal settlers because of the lack of a relocation site.

The controversial gate is on Tumana Road, the shortest route from Marikina City to Katipunan Avenue in Quezon City.

An obstruction

"We considered the [closure of the gate] as an obstruction that had to be removed," city administrator Melvin Cruz also said.

But Santiago said the city made its "biggest mistake" when it destroyed the gate.

The lot in front of the closed gate in the subdivision, which connects Tumana Bridge to Balara, Quezon City, is owned by Medina Foods Industries Inc.

The company has not donated the lot to the city, Santiago said.

A big fuss over nothing

ON TARGET

Ramon Tulfo

ALL THOSE speculations whether First Gentleman Mike Arroyo checked into a $20,000 suite at MGM Hotel in Las Vegas, Nevada were for nothing.

So what if he really got a very expensive room? Wasn't it given to him for free? The government didn't spend a single centavo for that room.

So what if he got a complimentary room, shouldn't we be happy our First Gentleman was given importance in the world's gambling capital when he's not even a high roller?

Mike Arroyo can never be a high-stakes gambler because he's an epitome of thrift. In short, *kuripot si Mike*.

Twice we saw each other in San Francisco, California, and I was amazed he always checked in at Canterbury Inn, a hotel for tourists on a very tight budget, in the downtown city by the bay.

"*Mura dito, Mon, at safe pa dahil maraming Pinoy* (It's cheap here and safe because there are many Pinoys)," he told me, referring to Canterbury Inn.

Why was Mike Arroyo given a luxury suite, if at all? That can be explained.

Perhaps Efraim Genuino, chair of the Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corp. (Pagcor), coordinated with MGM Hotel for Mike Arroyo to be given a luxury suite.

You see, all casino operators and top officials throughout the world practice reciprocity. When casino operators or officials visit a casino in another country, they're given VIP treatment by the host casino. Everything is on the house.

* * *

Once, the First Gentleman and I went to Hong Kong on a vacation and took the same plane. He insisted on taking the economy class.

A gay newspaper columnist took notice of Arroyo traveling economy and me on business class.

Not that I mind, since I paid for my own fare. But Arroyo's reply to the columnist was that he wanted to show ordinary people he was with them. There was no other way, he said, but for him to take economy.

By the way, the Philippine Airlines crew tried to have Mike Arroyo transferred to business class, but they were politely turned down.

* * *

Another big fuss over nothing is a top-ranking American diplomat being frisked at Ninoy Aquino International Airport (Naia).

So what if Ambassador Christopher Hill, newly appointed assistant secretary of state for East Asian and Pacific Affairs, underwent a security check at the Naia.

Isn't it SOP (standard operating procedure) for all passengers—no matter how high up the society or government ladder they are—to be checked for weapons or bombs before boarding their plane?

Why did we make a big fuss over Hill being made to undergo a security check? Because we Filipinos still have a colonial mentality.

In the eyes of most Pinoys, a white man is superior even if he's a hobo.

* * *

Most of the more than 60 members of the elite Special Action Force (SAF) undergoing Ranger training recently deserted after complaining of being hazed.

The SAF is the commando unit of the Philippine National Police (PNP). Its Army equivalent is the Special Forces and the Scout Rangers.

But the SAF is not living up to its image of being the toughest of the breed.

They're mostly spoiled brats. Look at those SAF members who deserted after they were hazed. Hazing or inflicting pain is part of the training of an armed elite force.

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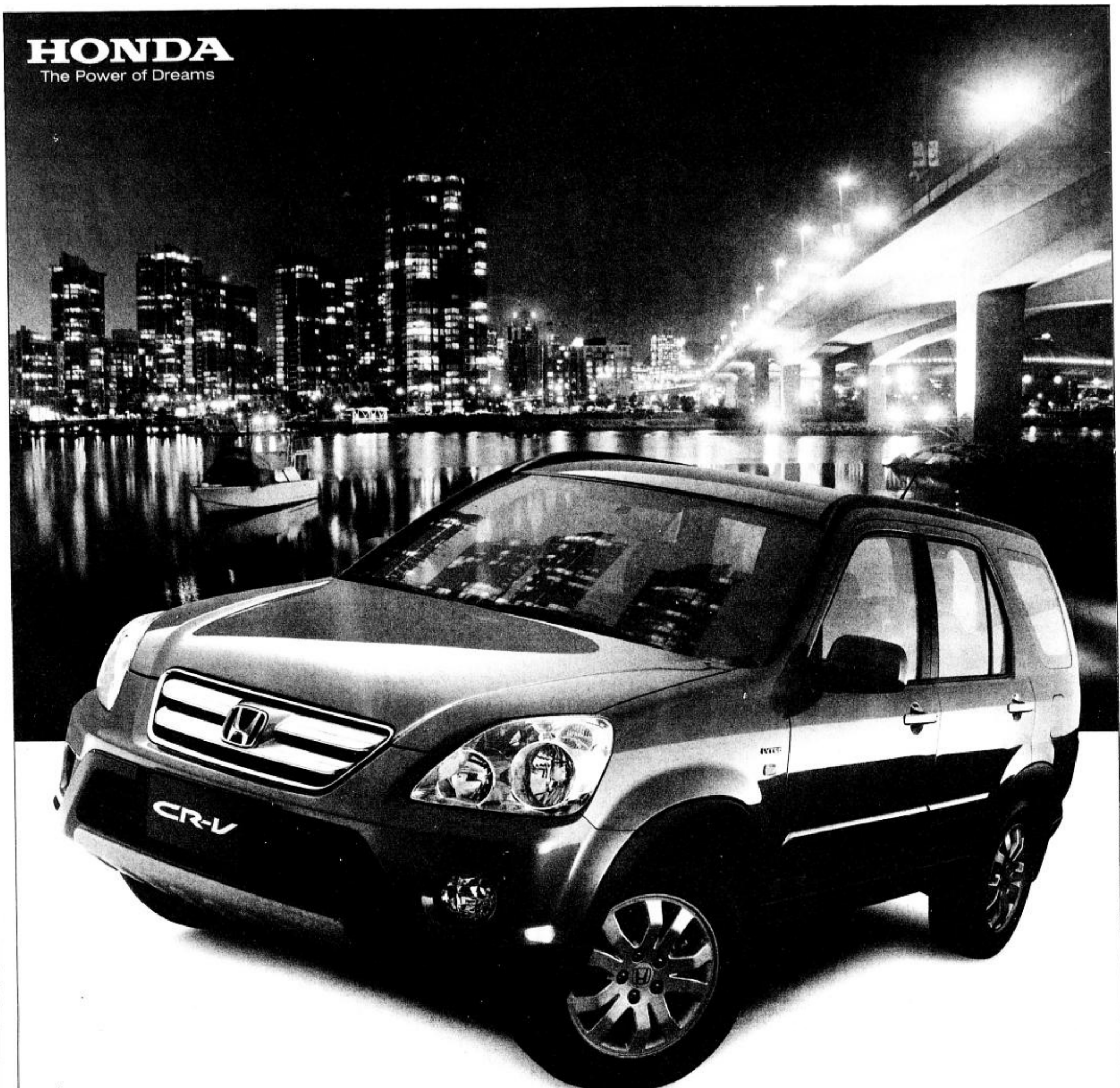

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GOLF: LPGA Kraft Nabisco Championship; 6:30 p.m.; ESPN—See how J-Ro performs in the third round.

SPORTS TV

Compiled by L. Mangulat

BASKETBALL: 2005 McDonald's All-American Jamfest and Game; 8 a.m. (r-8:30 p.m.); ESPN—The future stars strut their stuff in South Bend

NBA—Sonics vs Spurs; 9:30 a.m. (r-9 p.m.); Solar Sports - Seattle attempts to pour it on San Antonio.

Hotdogs top Kings

ROMMEL Adducul rams into Antonio Smith in a loose ball battle. AUGUST DELA CRUZ

GAME TODAY (*Xavier Gym, Cagayan De Oro*)
6:15 p.m.—Alaska vs Talk N Text
GAMES TOMORROW (*Araneta Coliseum*)
4:45 p.m.—Shell vs San Miguel Beer
7:35 p.m.—Red Bull vs Sta. Lucia Realty

By June Navarro

STRUGGLING the past few games, Tonyboy Espinosa found the perfect time to shine last night.

Espinosa canned a three-pointer with 13.9 seconds left to carry Purefoods to a pulsating 92-87 win over Barangay Ginebra in the 2005 Gran Matador PBA Fiesta Conference at the Araneta Coliseum.

Espinosa's timely triple came after he bungled his last 14 attempts from beyond the arc this conference, a total of 18 missed treys overall since the quarterfinals of the Philippine Cup.

"I didn't hesitate on taking that shot and by God's grace, it went in," said the 30-year-old Espinosa, who got a new lease on life in the PBA after the TJ Hotdogs brought him in as a free agent in the last conference.

Espinosa finished with 10 points and seven assists to complement the fourth-quarter heroics of James Yap and Antonio Smith.

Yap scored 10 of his team-high 24 points in the final period and Smith added 19 points and 16 rebounds for the Hotdogs, who won their fourth game in five outings to tie the San Miguel Beermen at 4-1.

In the second game, Wesley Wilson had 46 points and 16 rebounds as Shell notched its third win in five outings with a 109-96 dismissal of slumping Coca-Cola.

The Tigers, after opening the conference with a victory, have dropped four straight games for a dismal 1-4 slate.

The scores:

First game

PUREFOODS 92—Yap 24, Smith 19, Limpot 12, Espinosa 10, Simon 10, Castillo 8, Raymundo 5, Artadi 2, Evangelista 2, Yee 0.

GINEBRA 87—Ellsma 32, Menk 14, Caguioa 12, Santos 9, Adducul 7, Dimaunahan 5, Seigle 4, Echavez 2, Salvacion 2.

Quarters: 23-14, 46-37, 65-62, 92-87.

Second Game

SHELL 109—Wilson 46, Alvarez 20, Dela Cruz 15, Tubid 11, Yap 9, Mamaril 4, Sta. Maria 2, Jackson 2, Sharma 0, Cruz 0.

COCA-COLA 96—Hendrix 43, Arigo 22, Peek 10, Reavis 5, Singson 4, Abarrientos 4, Juinio 3, Antonio 3, Bacani 2, Chia 0.

Quarters: 28-19, 58-41, 81-78, 109-96.

RP a strong ABC choice

By Jasmine W. Payo

THE PHILIPPINES enjoys a "60 percent" chance of hosting the 2007 Asian Basketball Confederation (ABC) according to International Basketball Federation (Fiba) president Carl Ching Menky yesterday.

"Your chances of hosting the ABC are very good," said Menky, who arrived from Hong Kong to meet with the country's sport officials. "It has been a long time since the Philippines hosted it."

Philippine Olympic Committee president Peping Cojuangco, however, chose not to disclose the status of its bidding proposal.

"We'll look into the picture and maneuver quietly," said Cojuangco, citing South Korea's bid to host the 2007 edition.

The Philippines last hosted the ABC in 1973, winning the tournament over Korea to pave the way for the country's last Olympic basketball appearance in Munich in 1974.

The ABC again serves as a big opportunity for RP to qualify for the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games with the top two teams in the tournament making it to the Olympiad.

Menky declared, however, that it may take some time before the country regains its lost glory in Asian basketball.

"You have so many good players but your disadvantage is not having so many international games," he said, adding that China is a formidable foe because it has "very big players."

US tax problems bugged Pacquiao

By Winchell Campos, *contributor*

LOS ANGELES—Unknown to many, the biggest distraction and mental anguish that may have affected Manny Pacquiao going into his last fight against Erik Morales came from the same people whom he used to trust and respect.

Pacquiao, who has ordered his new team of professionals including managers Shelly Finkel and lawyers Keith Davidson and Nick Khan to go all-out in gathering evidence against promoter Murad Muhammad and business manager Rodolfo Nazario's nefarious business activities, has started to see the light.

After years of being left in the dark about his finances in the United States where most of his big fights occurred, Pacquiao suddenly learned that he has not paid a single cent representing taxes since the year 2001.

Pacquiao's tax problems have been kept secret from him up until he fought Morales. Pacquiao, who commended Morales for coming in prepared and ready, later claimed that his mental preparedness for the fight was not 100 percent.

Muhammad and Nazario helped steer Pacquiao's career to greater heights starting on June 23, 2001 when he won the International Boxing Federation super bantamweight belt, defending it four times before winning the Ring Magazine "People's Champion" belt from Mexican Marco Antonio Barrera in 2003.

Initial talks with the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) indicated that Pacquiao has been remiss in paying taxes due the US government since 2001, according to Davidson after talking to a senior IRS officer Tuesday.

In fact, the IRS had threatened to withhold 100 percent of Pacquiao's $1.75 million prize after learning of his case.

Pacquiao's good faith in seeking the truth regarding his taxes, as well as his intention to pay anything that he might have owed, was the main reason why the IRS deducted only 30 percent or $525,000 from his purse.

Two months before the fight with Morales, Pacquiao tried to correct a mistake he made in December 2004 when he signed a two-fight agreement with Muhammad under duress.

POC ratifies Joseph as swim prexy

By Marc Anthony Reyes

THE PHILIPPINE Olympic Committee yesterday officially elevated the chess association as a regular member, upheld its recognition of Mark Joseph as new swimming president and declared that the ongoing leadership dispute in billiards will soon be over.

In a marathon general assembly held at the Café J in Makati City, the POC installed the National Chess Federation of the Philippines as its 38th voting member.

POC president Peping Cojuangco also said that the GA also ratified the recognition of Joseph as president of the Philippine Amateur Swimming Association, replacing Chito Ilagan.

While saying that "reconciliation must not be set aside," Cojuangco stressed that he can't afford to be soft on the Pasa issue after Ilagan withdrew from their earlier "win-win" agreement which they both put in paper and signed a few days earlier.

"I have exhausted all efforts to have an amicable settlement, we (he, Ilagan and Joseph) talked for four hours and agreed to sign an agreement despite a few minor complaints," said Cojuangco.

On the billiards leadership row, Cojuangco said he hopes to "find the right formula that will be acceptable to all parties concerned."

While Ernie Fajardo has been reelected president of the Billiards and Snooker Congress of the Philippines and a new board that includes billiards godfather Putch Puyat has been installed, Joaquin Perez de Tagle, former BSCP secretary general, insists the election was illegal because there was no quorum during the exercise.

Owner files raps vs Philracom

By Nelson Flores

A RACEHORSE owner yesterday filed graft charges against seven officials of the Philippine Racing Commission before the Office of the Ombudsman.

In his 12-page complaint, William Dagan accused Philracom chair Jaime Dilag of violating the provisions of Republic Act 3019 (the Anti-Graft and Corrupt Practices Act), RA 6713 (the Code of conduct and Ethical Standards for public officials) and Articles 217 and 220 (Malversation and illegal use of public funds) of the Revised Penal Code.

Specifically, Dagan said Dilag, in connivance with his fellow Philracom officials, caused the government to lose more than P28 million through overpayment to the Manila Jockey Club and the Philippine Racing Club of advances for the prize money of winning horses.

The other respondents in Dagan's complaint were Eduardo Jose, Romeo Buencamino, lawyer Vergel Cruz, Rogelio Tandiama, Eduardo Domingo Jr. and Reynaldo Fernando.

President Macapagal-Arroyo had appointed all the respondents except Buencamino.

Reacting to the charges, Dilag said: "It's a recycled issue that is becoming a personal attack against Philracom officials."

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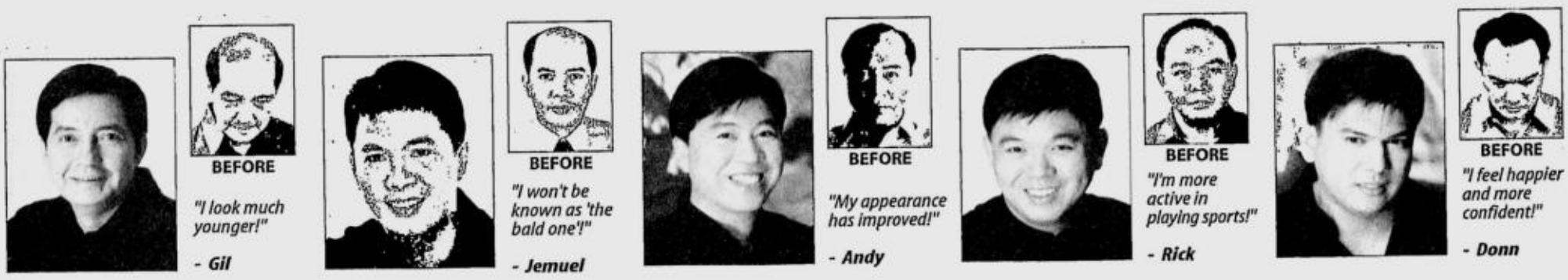

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Filipino netters wiped out

By Musong R. Castillo

THE PHILIPPINE challenge in the 16th Mitsubishi Lancer International Junior tennis championships failed to get past the second round yesterday after Kyle Joshua Dandan took another whipping from an old nemesis.

Hong Kong's Lai Xiaopeng claimed the scalp of the local No. 1 in just 72 minutes, 6-3, 6-1, wiping out the last of the Philippine bets in both the boys' and girls' singles at the Rizal Memorial hardcourts.

Dandan, a tall 16-year-old who will represent Asia in a European circuit in May, lost to Lai for the fourth straight time, with the Hong Kong bet dropping only 13 points in the second set.

From 3-all in the first set, Lai, who beat Dandan in Hong Kong, Vietnam and Malaysia, wrested control by taking the ball away from Dandan's backhand.

Lai held in the seventh game at love and then broke Dandan convincingly for a 5-3 lead. After taking just over 30 minutes to win the first set, Lai lost just eight points in winning the first four games of the second.

"I just lost control," said Dandan. "I was running him all over the court until 3-all, but I lost my backhand spin after that and the match got away."

In the distaff side, Anja Vanessa Peters, a Fil-German being considered for the Southeast Asian Games team, failed to stave off elimination at the resumption of her match with Canada's Chantal Beetham, going down 6-7(0), 6-7(8).

Promising Pablo Olivarez lost to Australian 12th seed Thomas Habsuda, 6-7(2), 6-1, even as debuting No. 1 Vivek Shokeen of India bundled out another Filipino, Michael Basco, 6-1, 6-1.

Basco was broken right in the first game after double-faulting three straight times. Shokeen, the world No. 43, closed out the set with four straight Basco double faults and a backhand winner.

But boys' No. 2 Myles Blake of Great Britain, the world No. 44, bowed to Gregory Gumbs of France, 6-4, 6-4.

Miguel Narvaez also got the door after taking a 4-6, 2-6 defeat at the hands of 16th seed Jiri Kosler of Czechoslovakia, while Nestor Celestino got the boot courtesy of seventh-ranked Martin Sayer of Hong Kong, 6-0, 6-2.

The top seed in girls' play, Chan Yung-jan of Taipei, also opened up with aplomb, ripping Belgium's Desiree Bastianon, 6-3, 6-0, while No 2 Caroline Wozniacki bounced back from a first set loss to upend Elina Hazanova, 1-6, 6-3, 6-3.

All told, a total of eight seeded players in the boys' division were shown the door, including No. 3 Andreas Haider-Maurei, No. 4 Tristan Farron-Mahon of Ireland, Panamanian No. 5 Alberto Gonzales, No. 8 Chang Huai-en of Taipei, Thai No. 9 Weerapat Doakmailee, No.13 Sanam Singh of India, and 15th seed Kirati Siributwong of Thailand.

CAROLINE Wozniacki of Denmark returns a serve against Elina Hasanova of Azerbaijan.
ERNIE SARMIENTO

Mockery in Mandaue

SPECTATOR

Al S. Mendoza

I COULD be wrong but if it's any indication that I might have been right, the crowd that watched the fights wholeheartedly concurred with my scorecards: The crowd booed the contradictory results announced by Rolando Mendoza, the ring announcer.

I refer to the bouts featuring Joel Bauya against Roger Galicia, and Elmer Gejon against Carlo Besares.

They are no Pacquiao, not yet anyways, but Bauya and Besares showed some spunk, even class, when they dished out their wares in the main bouts of a slugfest that I had covered three nights ago in Mandaue City.

Bauya is the reigning Philippine bantamweight champion, Gejon the mini-flyweight champion.

The fights were among six bouts scheduled at the newly refurbished New Gallera de Mandaue in Mandaue City on March 28. I raise a glass to Col. Vicente Loot, the police provincial director, for a job well done in renovating the arena.

I covered the fights from ringside, joining the Fistorama crew of producer Boy Cantada and director Manny Gabutina, who did a splendid job bundling up the fights for TV viewing Sunday afternoons on RPN 9.

Not only did Boy Cantada bring along famous sportscasters Ed Picson and Quinito Henson for the TV commentary of the fights, he also had as special ringside guest Celso "Kailyan" Templo, the assistant Customs Commissioner who took a well-deserved timeout after seizing nearly 30 SUVs hours earlier after foiling a smuggled attempt at the city port.

Customs Commissioner Bert Lina must be very proud of Apo Cesar's latest accomplishment that Bert himself had to fly to Cebu that day to witness the operation. Not to brag but had Bert known I was there, he might have also watched the fights—with me as his chief bodyguard no less. Bert, a great catch by GMA, and I have been pals since way back.

On second thought, I think it's to Bert Lina's credit that he didn't watch the fights. He might also disagree with the verdict of the bouts I had mentioned and it could lead into a spoiler to a day made memorable by those "pogi points" for Customs at the wharf.

For, truth to tell but the boxing presentation, put up by the inimitable Rex Wakee Salud, was marred by the booing in reaction to what the crowd thought was flawed decisions in the Bauya-Galicia and Gejon-Besares fights.

So disappointed was Besares, from the City of Kidapawan, that he cried unabashedly on his way to the dugout after the judges saw Gejon, the "batang klab" himself, the winner by unanimous decision.

The verdict was instantly met with the loudest, longest boo I have ever heard after a long, long while.

The booing returned not long after, when the judges ruled the Bauya-Galicia fight a majority draw when it was very evident that Bauya had clearly kept his 118-pound title.

In the Gejon-Besares bout, Ed, Quinito and I couldn't figure out how Gejon, the crowd's very own since Gejon is a native himself of Mandaue City, retained his crown.

Besares, always on the offensive, had clearly outfought Gejon and no way Besares could have lost it. In our scorecards, Besares is the new Philippine champion in the 105-pound limit.

I wouldn't be surprised if Besares had shed more tears than sweat when the verdict was announced. He brought his bitterness all the way to the lockers, sobbing uncontrollably the minute he stepped down from the ring.

The mockery in Mandaue is the kind of judging that destroys the future of Philippine boxing. Thus, wonder no more why we only have one world-class fighter at the moment: Manny Pacquiao.

If Eric Buhain, the new GAB chair, is reading this and doubts my position, he should immediately watch the fights on tapes.

If, after the viewing, the chair would say the judges were right on both fights, I rest my case.

What I'd do next is, maybe, to surrender my license as an international boxing judge.

* * *

FASTBREAK. My deepest condolence to brothers Dante and Nonong Fernandez and sisters Vielma Almonguerra and Diding Mosher, whose mother, Rosita "Tia Rosie" Tutica Fernandez, died on March 29 after a lingering illness. The remains of Tia Rosie lie at the residence of Nelson and Leng in Dayao, Roxas City. Interment will be announced later... Also sending my condolence to the loved ones of Vir Diwa, the very dignified Nissan executive, who passed away yesterday, also after a lingering illness. God is good and that's why He'll have mercy on the souls of good persons like Tia Rosie and Vir.

Revtex bets sizzle again

REVTEX standouts, led by multi-titled rider Glenn Aguilar, stamped their dominance in both the fifth leg of the 2005 Philippine National Motocross Championships and the 2005 FIM Puerto Princesa Asian Motocross Championships in Palawan recently.

Chosen by the National Motorcycle Sports and Safety Association to represent the Philippines in Asia's Olympics of motocross, Aguilar affirmed his status as the region's best rider on two wheels by winning the first of two motocross heats of the premier 125cc event in style.

Aguilar posted a coast-to-coast victory in the morning race as he grabbed the lead in the series with 94 points.

A day earlier, Kenneth San Andres and his father Jun-Jun won their respective categories to underscore Revtex's dominance of the local motocross circuit.

SPORTSWATCH

Ex-Georgetown stars visit Jr PBA

TWO former Georgetown University stalwarts highlight this year's edition of the 2nd Burlington-Jr. PBA. Courtland Freeman and Omari Faulkner will be in town from April 3-10 and will assist American coach Norman Black on Sunday in the annual summer cage camp. Freeman and Faulkner were teammates with the 2000-04 Hoyas team, the same school that produced the likes of Patrick Ewing, Allen Iverson, Alonzo Mourning and Dikembe Mutombo. The 6-foot-9 Freeman was team co-captain for the Hoyas for three years while Faulkner is a 6-foot-6 forward who comes off the bench. The visit of the two was arranged by Rebekah Drume, deputy cultural attaché of the US Embassy, in partnership with the PBA led by commissioner Noli Eala.

NBC sails with Sulpicio

SULPICIO Lines will again be the official sea carrier of the 2005 Panasonic-NBC national basketball championship which unwraps on April 23 with the Parañaque Jets of Vice Mayor and actor-TV host Anjo Yllana as host. On behalf of Sulpicio Lines CEO Carlos S. Go, vice president Harold Y. Go renewed the firm's partnership with the country's premier regional league after meeting with NBC sales director Cipriano "Pinong" Galo. The BAP-sanctioned Panasonic-NBC tourney is also supported by Accel, Molten, Nature's Spring, Philtranco, Cebu's JY Square Discovery Mall and partner hotels Bayview Park and Holiday Plaza-Cebu. Ten teams have already committed to play. NBC expects to sign up two more to complete a 12-team cast.

Reyes leads RP Asian 9-Ball charge

THE PHILIPPINES tries to reassert its dominance in Asian 9-Ball anew as Efren "Bata" Reyes and Francisco "Django" Bustamante lead the country's campaign in Jakarta for the second leg of the 2005 San Miguel Asian 9 Ball Tour beginning tomorrow at the Hanggar Billiard and Recreation Center in Jakarta, Indonesia. This marks the first time that Asia's only premier 9-ball tour makes an appearance in Indonesia. All the action from Jakarta will air live on STAR Sports at 5 p.m. on April 1, 11 a.m. on April 2 and 10:30 a.m. on April 3 (Manila time).

Milo BEST unveils schedule

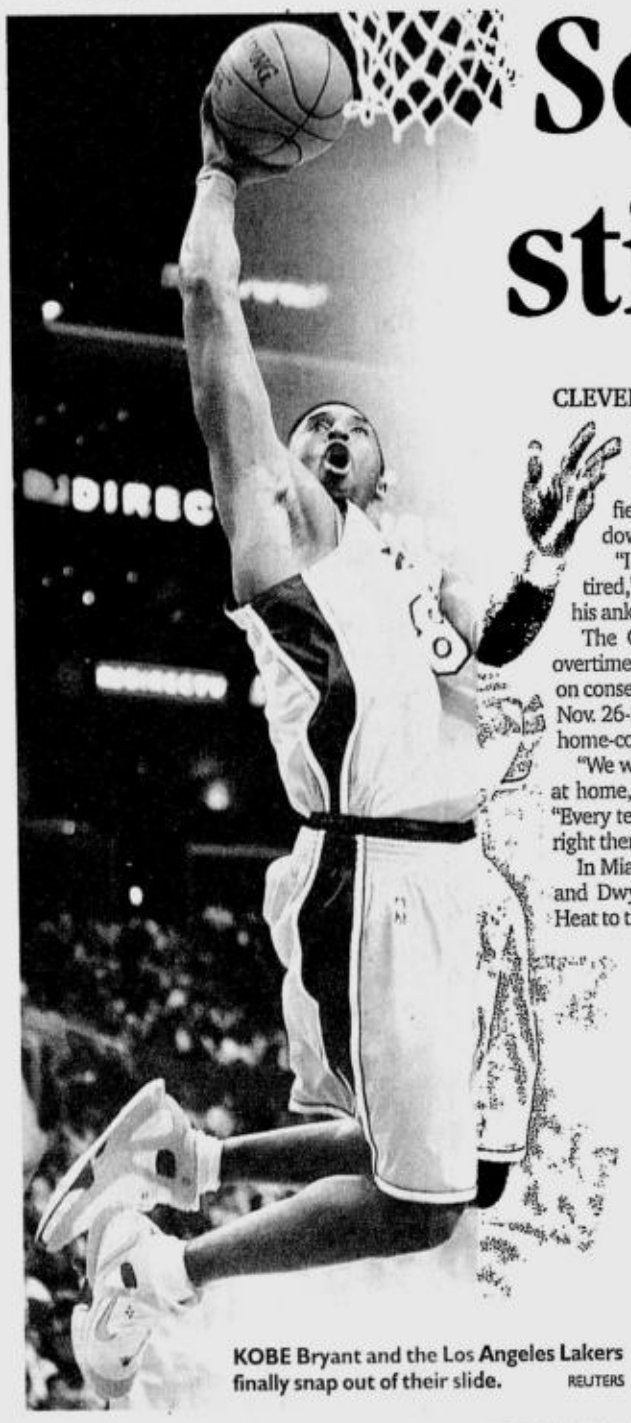
MILO BEST Center unveiled yesterday the schedule of its Wednesday/Saturday basketball classes at San Beda College-Manila, Notre Dame of Greater Manila and Jose Rizal University starting April 6. SBC will conduct level 1 (for all age groups) and level 2 (age group 5-11) from 8:30 to 11:30 a.m. level 2 (12 above) and levels 3 and 4 (all age groups) from 1 to 4 p.m. Level 1 and 2 sessions for all age groups are set from 8 to 11 a.m. at Notre Dame, while level 1 (all age groups) and level 2 (9-14) clinics are slated from 1 to 4 p.m. at JRU. Interested parties may also visit or call The Best Center at Scout Lozano corner Scout Reyes, Quezon City (4116260 and 3723065/66).

Las Piñas hosts GCAP tilt

FIERCE cockfighting action returns at Las Piñas Coliseum on April 4 and 6 via the Gentlemen Cockers Association of the Philippines (GCAP) 7-Cock Derby. More than 50 fights will be featured during the elimination round on Monday. The 4-cock finals is on Wednesday. Sponsor is Sagupaan Complexor 3000. Meanwhile, it's all systems go for the 330 K Big Event 6-Cock Derby on April 9. This one-day event will feature class A gamefowls that are already multiwinners. For inquiries, call 873-1040 and 874-3910.

Sta. Ana derby kicks off noon today

MORE than 120 fights are scheduled in today's staging of Daytime 3-Cock Derby at the Sta. Ana Cockpit. The first fight is set at noon. The guaranteed prize of P400,000 will be given to the winners regardless of the actual number of entries, said derby hosts Kags Paliza and Aba Badiola. Paliza and Badiola have invited some 80 participant from Metro Manila, Laguna, Batangas, Bulacan, Pampanga, Bicol, Rizal, Quezon Province and Laguna. For inquiries, call 8983474 and 8983475 or 0918-9251121 and 0921-5191962.



KOBE Bryant and the Los Angeles Lakers finally snap out of their slide. REUTERS

Sore LeBron still effective

CLEVELAND—LeBron James, playing on a sore left ankle, scored 22 points Tuesday to lead the Cleveland Cavaliers past the Los Angeles Clippers, 94-84.

James shot just 7-for-20 from the field, but he hit two key 3-pointers down the stretch.

"I thought we would be a lot more tired," said James, who got treatment on his ankle before the game. "I felt OK."

The Cavaliers, coming off a one-point overtime win Monday in New Orleans, won on consecutive nights for the first time since Nov. 26-27 and moved closer in the race for home-court advantage in the playoffs.

"We want the playoffs and we want to be at home, too," said point guard Eric Snow. "Every team is fighting for it now and we're right there. We have to keep winning."

In Miami, Shaquille O'Neal had 28 points and Dwyane Wade added 27, leading the Heat to their 17th straight victory at home, a 103-91 rout of the Toronto Raptors in a game marred by the fourth-quarter ejections of Toronto forward Morris Peterson and coach Sam Mitchell.

Damon Jones added 14 for Miami, which trailed by two with 10 minutes remaining before outscoring the Raptors 24-10 down the stretch.

In Memphis, Tennessee, Ray Allen and Jerome James scored 22 points each as the Seattle Supersonics clinched a Western Conference playoff berth with a 102-99 squeaker over the Grizzlies.

In Los Angeles, Kobe Bryant scored 20 of his 32 points in the second half as the Lakers broke an eight-game losing streak with a 117-107 victory over the road-weary New York Knicks. AP

Sta. Elena Cup starts

THE FIRST batch of a full field of 240 teams gets the ball rolling for the ninth Sta. Elena Cup member-guest invitational tournament today at the plush Sta. Elena Golf and Country Club course in Cabuyao, Laguna.

Today's teams teeing off either in the morning or afternoon shotgun batches will not be back until Saturday for their final rounds. And not until then will they get an idea of the score they need to raise the Sta. Elena Cup.

Cayanga is bringing in a new partner for this year's tilt in the hopes of repeating against a field that includes club champion Kevin Tayao, course-record holder Abe Rosal and reigning Ladies Open titlist Jayvie Agojo.

The event is sponsored by Omega, Mizuno, Royal Caribbean International, The Golf Shop at Baron Travel, Globe Platinum and Toyota Motors Philippines Inc. (TMPI).

Omega gave away a Seamaster watch during the pre-tournament cocktails.

Nike hoop camp eyes brightest prospects

WITH 20 of the country's top coaches joining hands with a brand name already synonymous with hoops, the Nike Summer League is expected to provide the brightest basketball prospects a perfect venue for honing their skills.

Already setting the hoop camp apart from the rest is that it will open its doors only to the country's best talents. The two-month league can also be a scouting ground for teams and leagues.

"If you have what it takes to play ball at the highest level, then this is your chance to be noticed," said Nike marketing manager Deeda Pama.

At least 3,000 participants, aged between 13 and 17, are expected to show up for the tryouts.

Registration will last until April 7. For Metro Manila applicants, forms are available at all Nike Park and Nike Stadium stores and the Nike Summer League Center, located at 753 Sgt. Bumatay St., Plainview, Mandaluyong (5330281 or 0922-544-NIKE). Forms can also be downloaded at www.nikebasketball.com.ph.

Completed forms must then be submitted to the NSL Center for proper scheduling.

Provincial applicants may get their application forms at all Nike Park, Stadium, Hall, Zone, Team, Athletic Club, Central, Station, Camp, Court, Sports Center and Sportshop stores. Completed forms must be submitted to the store where it was originally acquired. Deadline for provincial applications is on March 31, 2005.

The tryouts are set on April 8 to 10 at the Emilio Aguinaldo College Sports Center from 8 a.m. to 7 p.m.

Drafting is set on April 11 where each of the 20 Nike coaches will be choosing their players from the long list of tryout hopefuls.

ALESSANDRA Madrigal (top podium) receives her award.

9-year-old racer rips track mark

BANGKOK—The Philippines' Alessandra Madrigal and coach Allan Uy of Alessandra Racing ruled their respective races in Round 2 of the 2005 Thailand National Karting Championship in Bira Race Circuit in Chonburi.

It was only the first international stint for the 9-year-old Madrigal, who's backed up by principal sponsor ING bank, major sponsor Globe Gizmo and co-sponsors Dickies and Petron Ultron.

But she won the top plum in the Puma 85 class to emerge the youngest Filipina to win in a competitive international karting race. She also set a new track record lap of 52.1 seconds on the 1.2-kilometer track, breaking the previous record of 52.7

Uy, who's also Madrigal's personal coach, likewise proved Filipinos are the best in Asia in the field of karting when he copped the plum in the TAG PRO class driving an ITALKART Elite chassis.

With the local support from Thomas Raldorf of ITALKART Thailand, The Pizza Company Team, and Thai mechanics headed by Wan, Alessandra surprised karting aficionados with her record breaking feat as a first timer in the said event.

Madrigal finished the 10-lap final race in 9:12.958 or 21 seconds ahead of runner-up Chanucha P.

S'woods bets shine

MANILA Southwoods-Masters and Riviera let their name players step up the assault and seemed poised for blowout victories after the second round Tuesday of the 1st Jungolf National Club Championships, the opening leg of the Samsung Jungolf Tour.

On a day when a Korean lass torched the course with a six-under 66, Tonton Asistio and Gene Bondoc both broke par and steered Southwoods-Masters to a 19-point lead over sister team Southwoods-Legends in Division I play at the Mt. Malarayat Golf and Country Club course in Lipa, Batangas.

Asistio buried four birdies in a seven-hole stretch from the sixth and carded 69 for 57 points while Bondoc had a 71 for 55. With the 50 of Mike Bibat, SW-Masters had a 162 for the day and 312 for 36 holes.

Korean Seo Jae Lee stole the thunder from the fancied players with a tournament-best 60 points in a round that included eight birdies, five in the back nine.

Individual leaders were Asistio, Abdon and Bibat in the boys class and Jayvie Agojo, the RP Ladies Open champ who has yet to break par, Lee and Crystal Superal in the girls side.

16th Mitsubishi Lancer International Juniors Tennis Championship — Sidelights

March 30, 2005

IF THE roster of participants will be scrutinized, the Mitsubishi Lancer International Juniors Tennis Championships is proving that it is not only the strongest juniors tournament in Asia but also belies the negative reports of the international media regarding peace and order in the Philippine Metropolis.

You're asking why?

The parents of these players aged 18 years and lower representing 32 countries would not have allowed their children to travel to Manila if they are not sure of their security. And most of these players are accompanied only by their coaches, who we are pretty sure, would not have come here if they are not assured of their safety.

Regarding being the strongest tournament in Asia Today, the Mitsubishi Lancer International Juniors Tennis Championship, a Group I event, has attracted 11 boys and 11 girls who are in the Top 100 of the International Tennis Federation (ITF) world rankings.

The boys will be led by world No. 43 Vivek Shokeen of India who is seeded first followed by No. 44 Myles Blake of Great Britain. Completing the top 10 entries are No. 49 Andreas Haider-Naurel of Australia, Tristan Farron-Mahon of Austria, Alaberto Gonzalez of Panama (53), Abdullah Magdas of Kuwait (54), Martin Sayer of Hong Kong (60), Chang Huai-En of Taiwan (75), Weerapat Doakmailee of Thailand (76) and Christoph Hodl of Austria (84).

In the distaff side, the group is led by world No. seven Chan Yung-Jan of Taiwan followed by No. 10 Caroline Wozniacki of Demark, No. 11 Hsu Wen-Hsin of Taiwan and No. 22 Mihaela Buzarnescu of Romania. Completing the top eight seeds are Valerie Tetreaul of Canada (58), Vania King of the USA (60), Amina Rakhim of Kazakhstan (64) and Hwangl-Hsuan of Taiwan (65).

SIDELIGHTS March 31

During the opening rites of the Mitsubishi International Juniors Tennis Championships, Mitsubishi Motors Philippines, Corp. President Kengo Takase urged all participants to play their best as he "is looking forward to see them play against the best professional tennis players in the near future."

Mr. Takase is not only optimistic of this since the event, now on its 16th edition, has seen its products rise to the top of both the Association of Tennis Professionals (ATP) and Women's Tennis Association (WTA) leaderboards.

The MMPC president has seen the likes of American Andy Roddick, Australians Lleyton Hewitt and Mark Philippoussis, Leander Paes and Mahesh Bhupati of India and Angelique Wijaya of Indonesia, among others, cut their teeth in international competitions in the Philippines.

"It is indeed a pleasure to see once again our aspiring future tennis superstars from different parts of the world competing in this prestigious tournament. I am proud to say that this Group O tournament is now ranked No. 1 in Asia by the International Tennis Federation and with this, I would like to thank everyone for your patronage. Your presence alone makes this tournament a success," Mr. Takase declared as he opened the tournament last Tuesday.

To the uninitiated, the Mitsubishi Lancer International Juniors Tennis Championships is not only used by aspiring future world beaters as a gauge for their worth as future tennis superstars.

The tournament is also a rich source of points which count in the world rankings as the champions will be awarded a whopping 150 points with the runners-up getting 100. The semifinalists, quarterfinalists, Round-of-16 losers and Round-of-32 losers will earn 80, 60, 30 and 20 points, respectively.

A Group I tournament ranks second only to Group A events such as the Grand Slam tourneys (Australian Open, French Open, Wimbledon and US Open).

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Groups predict more movies over Internet

WASHINGTON—The music and film industries will continue to offer digital copies of songs and movies online for a price even if they lose a landmark Supreme Court case focusing on consumers who steal copyrighted material over the Internet, those industries' chief lobbyists said Monday.

"Consumers want a legal, hassle-free, reasonable-cost way to get their products online," said Dan Glickman, head of the Motion Picture Association of America. "There's no question you'll see a lot more opportunity for people in their homes to enjoy music and movies."

Glickman and Mitch Bainwol, chief executive of the Recording Industry Association of America, met with The Associated Press on the eve of arguments in the upcoming Supreme Court case, Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer Studios vs Grokster.

Regardless of the case's outcome, Bainwol predicted a rise among Internet music-subscription services, which permit consumers to listen to more than 1 million songs for a flat monthly fee.

In the Supreme Court case, entertainment companies want the court to permit them to sue manufacturers of file-sharing software popular among computer users for trading music and movies over the Internet.

Lower US courts have twice ruled that such file-sharing software can be used for "substantial" legal purposes, such as giving away free songs, free software or government documents.

The lower court rulings—effectively shielding the manufacturers of file-sharing software—have compelled entertainment companies to sue thousands of people caught illegally distributing songs and movies over the Internet.

"There's no question it's far more efficient and far more sensible to go after the people whose business is built on infringement," said Cary Sherman, president of the recording industry association. *AP*

A gift of speech, song and dance

The Miracle Theater of the Philippine Institute for the Deaf mounts a spectacular show with friends Regine and Aiza

By Ernie Pecho
Contributor

AIZA Seguerra

REGINE Velasquez

IT is a stage troupe like no other—the Miracle Theater of the Philippine Institute for the Deaf (PID).

As its graduation recital, PID produces a stage musical, always making it the biggest event of the school year. "Superkids, Superfriends and Superheroes," staged recently at RCBC's Carlos P. Romulo theater, starred more than 70 deaf children.

How they were able to deliver their lines, sing and dance, amazed the audience—as usual. And as usual, it was a long process of special training conducted by PID founder and executive director Julie Esguerra and her efficient staff.

"Firstly, these special children have to recognize the sounds," Esguerra told INQUIRER Entertainment. "Then they learn to pronounce syllables. The syllables are formed into words. As they progresses, full sentences follow."

For this year's exercise, Esguerra was director and scriptwriter, and principal Mary Ann Morales was creative and workshop director.

YOUNG members of the Miracle Theater

"Super friends" pertained to top entertainers who performed for free. After all, the event was intended to raise scholarship funds for indigent children. Regine Velasquez, Aiza Seguerra, Mark Bautista, Florante, Ka-Jing, Don Lopez and Sheila Lopez-Gamu were cheered by the young and very eager spectators.

Regine expressed the "super friends'" sentiments accurately: "It feels so good to be part of this miracle on stage." The good feelings were evident in their enthusiastically applauded numbers.

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TAKE FIVE

VIN Diesel

Tough, tender

VIN Diesel has jumped out of airplanes, skied down steep cliffs, flipped cars 360 degrees and battled the world's worst bad guys. In "The Pacifier," he switches gears as Shane Wolfe, steely soldier turned babysitter.

Describe Shane.
He's never really known a family. As a Navy SEAL, he has always avoided getting close to anyone. Suddenly, he's forced into having to try to be a caring father figure.

Describe his transformation.
Shane is completely amazing at just about every fighting maneuver known to man. But everyday chores bring him to his knees.

Did you need much time to think about accepting the role?
I was immediately attracted to it because I thought it would be a whole lot of fun.

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Boob-tube booboos

HOST: What do you like about "American Idol"?

Guest: The love-hate relationship between **Paula Abdul** and **Simon Cowell**—it makes the show so colorful!

Host: You like watching them fight?

Guest: Of course! After all, the relationship between Paula Abdul and Simon Cowell would not be the same if Paula wasn't there!

(—Obvious *ba*?)

***

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

Host: I hear you have an especially challenging role in your next TV show?

Guest: Oh, it's really so challenging—my acting metal is surely tested!

(Acting metal? —Oh, mettle!)

***

Host: What do our citizens think about the work of our legislators? Let's ask some of them who are here in the studio: *Kayo, Ma'am, ano ang tingin mo sa* performance *ng ating mga* senator *at* congressman?

Member of the studio audience: *Ang alam ko ... hindi ko alam, e.*

(Well, at least she's being honest!)

***

Host: How do we cook this delicious fish dish that you are demonstrating for us today?

Guest chef: First, you evaluate the quality of the fish when you buy it at the supermarket.

Host: How do you do that?

Guest: First, you look at the fish, from head to toe.

(Toe much!)

***

Host: How has life been for you after you won the talent search?

New star: It's exciting! At the press conference, I was blinded by all the flashlights of the photographers!

(One man's flashbulb is another man's flashlight!)

***

Host: You have a very busy schedule these days?

Guest: So busy, my legs typically very tiring!

(Ah, so.)

***

Host: What about shows abroad, do you plan to perform there?

Guest: Soon, I hope. I'd like to do it at one point in the time.

(Well, if you say so ...)

***

Host: I hear you had a problem on a recent flight to Boracay?

Guest: Yes, but it wasn't my fault. The problem was actually caused by *yung babaing* stewardess.

(As opposed to *yung lalaking* steward?)

***

Host: Were you sad when you did not win the contest abroad?

Guest: I admit. But I want to admit that I'm not a sour loser, *ha*?

(Combination of sour grapes and sore loser—hey, that's quite a trick!)

Carmen Rosales' filmography

THE TRIBUTE to **Carmen Rosales** that the National Commission for Culture and the Arts recently mounted has revived public interest in the career of the erstwhile Queen of Philippine movies. Younger film buffs now want to know more about her, the films she starred in, etc.

Thanks to film historian and Sampaguita Pictures veteran Lynn Pareja, we can share Ms Rosales' filmography:

She began acting on the big screen in 1938, in Excelsior Films' "Mahiwagang Binibini" and "Arimunding-munding." The following year, she moved to Sampaguita, where she was made a contract star, and where she made most of her starrers until 1964:

1939, "Takip Silim." 1940, "Señorita," "Lambingan," "Diwa ng Awit," "Colegiala." 1941, "Carmen," "Panambitan," "Princesita," "Tampuhan," "Palikero," "Lolita." 1944, "Tatlong Maria." 1946, "Guerilyera," "Probinsyana." 1947, "Kaaway ng Bayan," "Si, Si, Señorito," "Mameng, Iniibig Kita," "Hele Hele Bago Quiere," "Ang Kamay ng Diyos."

1948, "Ang Selosa," "24 na Pag-ibig," "Hindi Kita Malimot." 1949, "Simpatika," "Kampanang Ginto," "Camelia," "Sipag ay Yaman," "Batalyon Trece." 1950, "Ang Bombero," "Ang Magpapawid." 1951, "Nanay Ko," "Anak Ko," "Babae, Babae, at Babae Pa," "Walang Kapantay," "Huling Konsiyerto."

1953, "May Umaga Pang Darating," "Inspirasyon," "Rosa Villa." 1954, "Maala-ala Mo Kaya," "Matandang Dalaga," "MN," "Luha ng Birhen." 1955, "Ang Tangi Kong Pag-ibig," "Uhaw na Pag-ibig," "R.O.T.C.," "Iyong-iyo." 1956, "Lydia." 1959, "Sandra," "7 Pagsisisi," "Debutante," "Baby Face," "Vicky," "Esmeralda." 1960, "Tatlong Magdalena," "Estella Mondragon," "Mother Dearest."

1961, "Octavia," "Halik sa Lupa," "Dayukdok." 1962, "Sugat sa Balikat." 1964, "Binibiro Lamang Kita," "Anak ni Kamagong," "The Dolly Sisters," "Mama's Boy."

DARNA'S JOURNEY

A two-part special on "Darna" — its journey from Filipino *komiks* to the silver screen and now, television — airs tonight and tomorrow on GMA 7, hosted by Michael V. The special will include interviews with the heirs of "Darna's" creator, Mars Ravelo; vintage clips and features on various stars who have played the purely Pinoy heroine, and conversations with the cast of the forthcoming TV version, directed by Eric Quizon and Dominic Zapata and starring Angel Locsin, left.

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2 PACIFIER
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6:05, 8:30, 10:55
GP

3 MS. CONGENIALITY
12:10, 2:55, 5:40
8:25, 11:00
GP

4 ALONE IN THE DARK
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THE PACIFIER GP 1:15,1:25,3:35,5:45,7:55,10:10
ROBOTS GP 1:25,3:35,5:45,7:55,10:05
BE COOL PG13 12:15,2:45,5:15,7:45,10:15
ALONE IN THE DARK R13 12:50,3:10,5:30,7:50,10:10
MISS CONGENIALITY 2 PG13 12:50,3:15,5:40,8:05,10:30

st rmall EDSA-SHAW Tel. No. 726.61.50
3 Ms Congeniality 2
4 Shaolin Vs Evil Dead
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2 MISS CONGENIALITY 2 MTRCB: PG-13 11:00, 1:45, 4:30, 7:15, 10:00
3 BE COOL MTRCB: PG-13 10:50, 1:35, 4:20, 7:05, 9:50
4 ALONE IN THE DARK MTRCB: R-13 11:55, 2:15, 4:35, 6:55, 9:15
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sm city fairview
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sm city sta. mesa
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sm city southmall
1 ALONE IN THE DARK 2 ROBOTS 3 RESERVED 4 RESERVED 5 HOSTAGE 6 BAHAY NI LOLA 2 7 BE COOL 8 THE PACIFIER 9 MS. CONGENIALITY 2 10 BOOGEYMAN
sm city bicutan
1 THE PACIFIER 2 MS. CONGENIALITY 2 3 BOOGEYMAN 4 ALONE IN THE DARK
sm cinema tutuban
1 RESERVED 2 RESERVED 3 RESERVED 4 RESERVED
sm supercenter sucat
1 ALONE IN THE DARK 2 BOOGEYMAN 3 THE PACIFIER 4 MS. CONGENIALITY 2
LUZON
sm city pampanga
1 HOSTAGE 2 CONFIDENCE 3 SHAOLIN vs EVIL DEAD 4 HITCH 5 ROBOTS 6 BAHAY NI LOLA 2
sm city baguio
1 MILLION DOLLAR BABY 2 BAHAY NI LOLA 2 3 INFECTION 4 ROBOTS
sm city batangas
1 ROBOTS 2 BAHAY NI LOLA 2 3 CURSED 4 BUNSHINSABA
sm city marilao
1 CURSED 2 MILLION DOLLAR BABY 3 FINAL CUT 4 ROBOTS
sm city bacoor
1 MILLION DOLLAR BABY 2 ROBOTS 3 THE PACIFIER 4 BAHAY NI LOLA 2 5 SHAOLIN vs EVIL DEAD 6 MS. CONGENIALITY 2 7 HOSTAGE 8 CURSED
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1 MILLION DOLLAR BABY 2 BAHAY NI LOLA 2 3 FINAL CUT 4 THE PACIFIER
sm city lucena
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VISAYAS AND MINDANAO
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1 HITCH 2 RESERVED 3 SON OF THE MASK 2 4 BAHAY NI LOLA 2 5 THE AVIATOR 6 MILLION DOLLAR BABY 7 RESERVED 8 CURSED
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1 HITCH • THX	6 MS. CONGENIALITY 2
2 BOOGEYMAN	7 ROBOTS
3 BE COOL	8 HOSTAGE
4 ALONE IN THE DARK	9 CONSTANTINE
5 PACIFIER	10 MILLION DOLLAR BABY

ERMITA

1 PACIFIER	
2 HOSTAGE	5 MS. CONGENIALITY 2
3 HITCH	6 BOOGEYMAN
4 ALONE IN THE DARK	7 BE COOL

METRO EAST

1 MS. CONGENIALITY 2	5 PACIFIER
2 HITCH	6 BOOGEYMAN
3 ROBOTS	7 HOSTAGE
4 ALONE IN THE DARK	8 CONSTANTINE

NOVALICHES

1 PACIFIER	5 ROBOTS
2 SHAOLIN VS. EVIL DEAD	6 HOSTAGE
3 MS. CONGENIALITY 2	7 RESERVE
4 ALONE IN THE DARK	8 RESERVE

PIONEER

1 PACIFIER	3 BOOGEYMAN
2 MS. CONGENIALITY 2	4 ALONE IN THE DARK

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2 MS. CONGENIALITY	2 NIGHT JOB
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4 BUNSHINSABA	4 SON OF THE MASK 2
5 SON OF THE MASK 2	5 CURSED
6 RAY	6 RAY

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G4 GLORIETTA 4	1 BE COOL	2 BOOGEYMAN	THX MS. CONGENIALITY 2 12:30, 3:00, 5:30, 8:00, 10:30 GUARANTEED SEATS	
	4 HITCH	5 ROBOTS	6 THE PACIFIER	7 ALONE IN THE DARK
G1 GLORIETTA 1	1 ALONE IN THE DARK		2 MS. CONGENIALITY 2	
	3 THE PACIFIER		4 BE COOL	
ATC GREENBELT CINEMA	THX 1 THE PACIFIER	2 BE COOL	3 MS. CONGENIALITY 2	
	4 ROBOTS		5 BOOGEYMAN	
AC10 GREENBELT CINEMA	1 ASSAULT ON PRECINCT 13	2 THE FINAL CUT	3 BUNSHINSABA	
	4 RAY		5 CLOSED	
GB1 GREENBELT CINEMA	1 MS. CONGENIALITY 2 12:00, 2:25, 4:50, 7:15, 9:40			
	2 THE PACIFIER 10:55, 1:00, 3:05, 5:10, 7:15, 9:20			
GBX GREENBELT CINEMA	THX 1 MISS CONGENIALITY 2 1:35, 4:00, 6:25, 8:50, 11:15 GUARANTEED SEATS	THX 2 THE PACIFIER 1:05, 3:10, 5:15, 7:20, 9:25, 11:30 GUARANTEED SEATS	3 SPANGLISH 3:05, 5:35, 8:05, 10:35 GUARANTEED SEATS	
	4 BOOGEYMAN 1:30, 3:30, 5:30, 7:30, 9:30, 10:30 GUARANTEED SEATS		5 BE COOL 1:20, 3:50, 6:20, 8:50, 11:20 GUARANTEED SEATS	

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'Otso-Otso' songwriter in concert

IT'S HIS turn.

Lito Camo, the songwriter of such phenomenal novelty hits as "Spageti Song," "Bulaklak," "Pito-Pito" and "Otso-Otso," takes center stage in his first major concert, "*Lagi nă Lang Kayo ... Ako Naman!*" at the Music Museum on April 29, 8:30 p.m.

Joining him in the musical-comedy concert are Willy Revillame, Viva Hotbabes, Angelica Jones, Ja-Boom Twins, K & the Boxers, Yachang and Masculados.

SHOW TIME

What is it about Lito that capture the ears—and hearts—of audiences? It's his being the typical Pinoy with humble beginnings.

When he first came to Manila from his hometown in Oriental Mindoro, Lito worked as a houseboy.

Moonlighting as a chauffeur one day, he found himself in the company of musicians. He knew it right then: he wanted a career in the music industry.

Soon enough, one of the musicians discovered Lito's songwriting talent, and arranged for him to sing his compositions in a studio. There he caught the ear of record producer Ed Formoso, who helped him get his first record deal.

For ticket inquiries, call 891-9999.

LITO Camo

BAMBOO

Bamboo in Davao

Bamboo performed last week at The Venue in Davao City. It was an SRO event. Overwhelmed, band leader Bamboo Mañalac thanked "everybody, including the owners of our home in Davao, Linmarr Apartelle."

Tonight

Avril Lavigne and Simple Plan in Bonez 2005 Tour at Bonifacio Global City Open Field. Call Ticketworld outlets, 891-9999.

Johnny Cash and The Jukebox Cardinals at Funn Side on Timog Ave., Quezon City.

Cadio and his band will be at e's Bar at the Edsa Shangri-La, 8:30 p.m.

Tomorrow

Ella May Saison performs at the Discovery Suites' Serendipity Lounge, 9 p.m.

"Nyoy and Mannos Salute the Beatles" at the Captain's Bar of Mandarin Oriental. Repeats on April 8, 15 and 29.

Gary V and Roxie Barcelo in the second leg of "Gary V Hits ... Philippine Tour" at the Leyte National High School in Tacloban City, and on April 9 at the Pana-ad Park and Sports Complex in Bacolod City.

ELLA May Saison

April 4

Club Mwah! presents "Follies de Mwah 2" Mondays through Fridays at 10 p.m. Call 535-7943.

April 8

Ramon Acoymo, Dean of the UP College of Music, will be the featured tenor soloist for the Philippine Philharmonic Orchestra's season finale at the Cultural Center of the Philippines Main Theater, 8 p.m.

"Bedazzled," an hour-long Broadway cum Las Vegas show at Club Mwah (Fridays and Saturdays), 10:30 p.m. Call 535-7943.

Tim Tayag, Al Manalo and Mike Unson in "April Fools—Stand Up Comedians On The Loose!" 7 p.m. at San Mig El Pueblo, Ortigas. Call 637-5499.

May 6 to 29

Once On This Island, a musical retelling of the Little Mermaid fable, runs from May 6 to 29 with Friday and Saturday evening shows at 8 p.m. and Sunday matinee shows at 3 p.m. at the Carlos P. Romulo Theater, RCBC Plaza, Makati City. For interested fundraising groups and sponsors, call 536-5844.

May 13 and 14

Ella May Saison is back with a concert series called "Soulful, the Concert" at the Music Museum on May 13 and 14. Nina, Akafellas and Jimmy Bondoc will be her guests. For details, call TicketWorld at 891-9999.

May 13 and 15

Alvin Barcelona, a Catholic lay preacher and singer-songwriter, in his first major concert, "Believe," at the Party Central, Mother Ignacia Avenue. For inquiries, reservations and sponsorships, call Beaconlight, 722-9562, or e-mail beacon@philonline.com.

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ENTERTAINMENT

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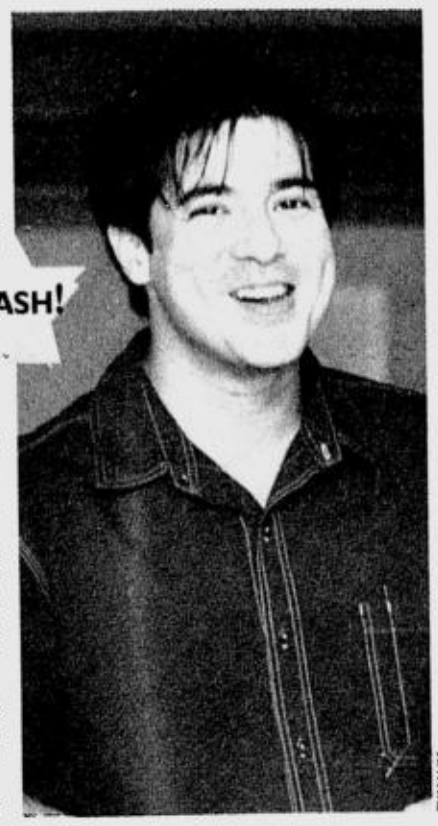
Aga's very much alive, thank you



"WHO me?"

A bewildered Aga Muhlach told INQUIRER Entertainment yesterday when asked about the wild rumor that he perished in a car accident on the way to his farm in Batangas.

"That's not true, obviously" the actor said in a phone interview. "I've been home all day. After noon, I went to the gym. I'm very much alive."

The news, which is said to have originated from the public information system of the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH), said the crash happened somewhere in Cavite.

Aga continued: "I left my phone in the car. When I got back [from the gym], I saw that I had missed a lot of calls. Tita Ethel [Ramos, his manager] said the news came from Senate or Congress. *Ang sikat ko naman masyado* [I must be that important]."

Fans will not see Aga for three whole weeks, though. He is flying to Dubai on April 10 to shoot a new movie with Claudine Barretto for Star Cinema.

Marinel R. Cruz

Looks like serious trouble for top 2 post-prod firms

By Bayani San Diego Jr.
Contributor

INQUIRER EXCLUSIVE

LVN Pictures and Road Runner, the Philippines' top post-production houses for movies, are facing serious financial difficulty, according to industry insiders.

Practically all movie productions in the country today, both expensive and low-budget, are brought to these two firms for every stage of the post-production process—from film processing to printing, from editing to dubbing and sound mixing.

Both LVN and Road Runner boast state-of-the-art technology and world-class technicians. Road Runner offers Dolby Digital 5.1 processing, and LVN is accredited by Image Care Program, the ISO (International Standardization Organization) of film laboratories. The accreditation is issued by global giant Kodak.

Needless to say, the two facilities play vital roles in the industry. A third player, Cine Color, just opened shop. Meaning, if Road Runner and LVN stopped operations, film production in this country could grind to a halt.

The worsening crisis in RP movies is directly to blame for these two companies' problems, the sources said.

In previous years, at least three Filipino movies opened every week. These days, one per month is lucky. This week, there's not a single new Filipino movie in cinemaplexes.

This means that post-production companies are idle. If they go out of business altogether, one possible scenario is that local movies would have to be sent abroad for processing.

"That's a no-win situation," Sandy Santamaria, line producer for Unitel Pictures, told INQUIRER Entertainment. "As it is, producers have a hard time recouping their investments. Shipping out movies for post-production would make it virtually impossible to break even."

Bright side

But another possible outcome would be the streamlining of the filmmaking process. For example, directors would have to use live sound to bypass the dubbing stage. Internationally, live-sound movies are considered superior to dubbed ones. (Problem is, we don't have sound stages in this country. But that's another story altogether.)

Another bright prospect would be the eventual preeminence of digital filmmaking.

That would hopefully kick the door wide open for a new breed of filmmakers with all-new cinematic ideas.

"This could change the face of the movie industry as we know it," Santamaria noted. "Movie companies would have no choice but to adjust."

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Man claims Kris' show was his idea

By Marinel R. Cruz

A MAN from Pangasinan has filed a complaint against actress-TV host Kris Aquino and two ABS-CBN executives, claiming that the game show "Pilipinas, Game Ka Na Ba?" was his idea.

Romeo C. Bagarino of Alaminos filed the complaint before City Prosecutor Abraham Ramos. He accused Aquino, ABS-CBN president Cito Alejandro and chair Gabby Lopez of copyright infringement.

Bagarino claimed that he sent a letter to ABS-CBN on Jan. 17, 2002, presenting his concept for a TV program, which he called "Pyramid Game Show." The network did not reply, Bagarino said in a statement sent to the media.

After about two years, ABS-CBN launched "Pilipinas, Game Ka Na Ba," whose concept, the statement noted, was similar to his copyrighted "Pyramid Game Show."

KRIS Aquino

"Pilipinas, Game Ka Na Ba," with Aquino as host, is the reformatted version of "Game KNB?," which aired on ABS-CBN in the evenings on weekdays. The new show, which first aired last November, is now seen at noontime.

Ten contestants are chosen daily, but only four get to join the Pyramid Round, competing for the P50,000 grand prize. The winner of this round then challenges the current champion for the jackpot prize of P1 million.

Bagarino said he wrote another letter, addressed to Alejandro and dated Dec. 15, 2004, "pointing out the infringement ... but to date, [he] has not given the courtesy of a reply."

The network issued its own official statement, maintaining that Bagarino's concept was "very much different" from the contested show's format.

"It is true that there is an on-going case regarding the subject," said the ABS-CBN statement. "The network feels ... it is best left for the court to decide on the merits of the case."

According to Bagarino's statement, his copyright application was filed and deposited on Jan. 11, 2002, with a certificate issued by the National Commission for Culture and the Arts (NCCA) on Jan. 18 of the same year.

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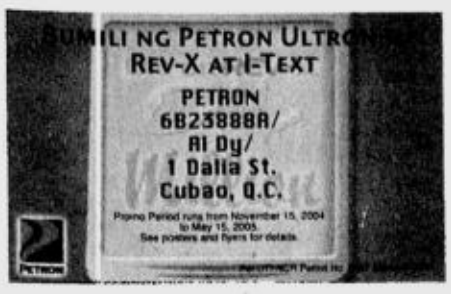

THURSDAY, MARCH 31, 2005

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E-mail: pr_business@inquirer.com.ph
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Gov't finds funds for SMC rights offer

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE GOVERNMENT is subscribing to the stock rights offering of food and beverage giant San Miguel Corp. after all, using some P2.1 billion in cash dividends from the Coconut Investment Industry Fund.

This will cover part of the P4.5 billion needed to keep the 27-percent stake in SMC held by the Presidential Commission on Good Government through the United Coconut Planters Bank-administered CIIF, which, in turn, holds the shares in trust for coconut farmers.

"We've found money to subscribe [to the rights offer]," said Albay Rep. Joey Salceda, chair of the House committee on economic affairs.

"This will minimize the dilution of the government shares as well as prevent the loss of board seats in SMC," he added.

The dividends due to the government had been accumulated through the years since the fund was put up, Salceda said.

He said state-owned pension funds Social Security System and Government Service Insurance System would also subscribe to the rights offer to maintain their 14-percent combined stake in SMC.

Today is the last day to subscribe to the shares offering of the food and beverage giant, which is currently on a global expansion binge.

With the P2.1 billion in cash dividends, Salceda said it would be easier to raise the remaining funds if the government decides to pursue a full subscription at the last minute.

Salceda said the government could use the SMC shares as collateral to borrow from the state-owned Development Bank of the Philippines the remaining P2.4 billion needed to maintain in full the 27-percent interest.

As of press time, banking sources said no agreement had been reached between the PCGG and DBP, but the latter is readying funds to assist in the SMC offering.

Some P4.5 billion is needed to prevent the dilution of the 27-percent stake controlled by the PCGG through the CIIF while the SSS and GSIS would separately spend P800 million and P1.5 billion, respectively.

SMC is raising P17.8 billion from the sale of 285 million additional shares to existing stockholders, representing 10 percent of its outstanding shares. It has set the price of class "A" shares at P54.70 and "B" shares at P74.74. The offer period started last March 10 and will close on March 31.

SMC's other major shareholders include its chair and CEO Eduardo Cojuangco, who owns about 20 percent; Japan's Kirin Brewery Ltd. with 19 percent, and mall magnate Henry Sy with 6 percent. The free float is estimated at about 9 percent of the total shares.

Finance Secretary Cesar Purisima earlier ruled out borrowing from government financial institutions if only to prevent the dilution of the government stake in SMC. He said it was also uncertain whether or not a proposed assignment of subscription rights could work out.

"In terms of value of investment, they [SMC shares] will have the same value because the assets of the company are still there and in fact if there are new rights, maybe the value on a per share basis can be enhanced so you don't lose anything," Purisima explained.

"You may lose some opportunity as some people are expecting, that if you don't buy, then you don't participate in the gain in the future. But that's speculation and as far as I'm concerned we are not in the business of speculating in stocks," he said.

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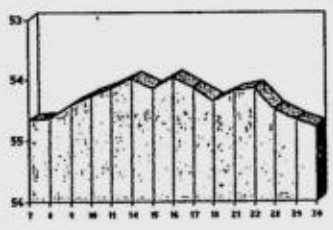


₱54.77 = $1
As of 5 p.m., March 30, 2005

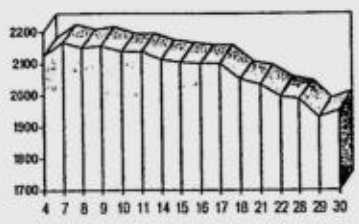
¥107.27 = $1
As of 5 p.m., March 30, 2005

GOLD: $426.60-427.10
per ounce Hong Kong, March 30, 2005

STOCK MARKET

Shares rise on bargain-hunting

PSE COMPOSITE INDEX



SHARE prices closed one percent higher yesterday as a technical bounce after a five-day downturn saw the market recover some of the ground lost, dealers said.

They said they expected the technical recovery to continue in the coming sessions as stocks have been oversold.

At the same time, some investors still likely prefer to stay on the sidelines as they wait to see if Congress can pass a crucial tax measure to increase the value-added tax (VAT) to 12 percent from 10 percent during a three-day special session that started yesterday.

The Philippine Stock Exchange composite index gained 19.4 points to 1,951.38 after trading between 1,890.78 and 1,956.37. Volume was 1.94 billion shares worth P2.14 billion.

The broader all-shares index gained 2.32 points to 1,177.08.

Losers narrowly edged out gainers 45 to 44, with 36 stocks unchanged.

"It looks like the correction is over," said Jonathan Ravelas of Banco de Oro Universal Bank.

He said the main index may continue to rise to around 2,050 points should it break the resistance level of 1,980.

However, Lawrence de Leon of Accord Capital Equities warned that "despite (yesterday's) recovery, various concerns still remain. Not

SHARES/ B2

Private firms not keen on 4-day workweek

By Abigail L. Ho

WHILE supportive of the government's efforts to conserve energy through the four-day workweek starting next month, the Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry is not too keen on adopting the scheme itself.

PCCI president Donald Dee said it would be difficult for the private sector to do the same as the scheme would adversely affect a company's overall costs.

"It will be difficult for the private sector to do the same as we operate on the basis of spreading production to lessen fixed costs," he said.

A four-day workweek, he explained, would not optimize the use of plant equipment and facilities, therefore adding to, instead of alleviating, a company's overall burden.

But he was quick to add that private sector firms already had in place their own set of energy conservation measures, in keeping with the government's thrust to lessen energy consumption due to the high cost of fuel.

He noted that many private firms already did pretty much the same things that government agencies did to conserve energy: not turning on air-conditioning units before 8 a.m., turning these off at 5 p.m., and turning off the lights when these were not needed.

"We support the four-day workweek for government agencies. It's a government effort to get us into a mindset of conservation, and the private sector should do the same. But it would be really difficult to implement the same thing because of the cost considerations," he said.

Malacañang last week announced that a four-day workweek would be implemented for all national government employees, except those working in front-line agencies like the Bureau of Customs and the Bureau of Internal Revenue, from April to end-May.

Energy Secretary Raphael Lotilla had earlier said that this would be done mainly to help the government lead the way in con-

PRIVATE/ B3

Reviving OPSF to cost gov't P13B, says energy official

By Abigail L. Ho

THE GOVERNMENT will have to shell out at least P13 billion to revive the defunct Oil Price Stabilization Fund and to bring gasoline and diesel prices back to P23 and P15.50 a liter, respectively.

Energy Undersecretary Peter Anthony Abaya said this amount was even higher than what the government hoped to generate from slapping value-added taxes on power and petroleum products combined.

At a VAT rate of 10 percent, he said in an earlier interview that the government could collect P32.7 billion from the petroleum industry and P24.9 billion from the power sector, broken down into the generation and transmission sectors.

But the figures used to compute these amounts, he explained, were taken from 2003 petroleum and power consumption. Using 2004 figures, when demand for fuels went up by 20 percent, the amount could even be higher.

He was quick to add, however, that the Department of Energy figures did not take into consideration the input VAT component that the Department of Finance used in computing the final VAT yield that the government would end up with.

Based on the DOF's calculations and taking the input VAT component into consideration, the government could generate some P10 billion from petroleum products and more than P2 billion from the power sector.

The initial amount needed to bring back the OPSF is, therefore, even higher than what the government hopes to collect by imposing VAT on power and petroleum products.

He noted that even oil-rich countries like Indonesia had quite some problems maintaining subsidies on their petroleum products as they incurred billions of dollars in expenses just to keep pump prices stable.

According to documents from the DOE, the Indonesian government had, as of end-2004, spent some $7 billion in subsidies just so diesel prices would not shoot up in keeping with the world market trend.

However, with regional and international prices soaring to unprecedented levels, eclipsing historic highs almost every day, the Indonesian government had to raise gasoline and diesel prices by as much as 29 percent.

The Malaysian government also had to put in some state subsidy for diesel to prevent prices from shooting up. As of end-2004, the Malaysian government had already spent about $1.4 billion for diesel subsidies alone.

Despite these subsidies, the Malaysian government still had to jack up prices by 6 percent.

The Thai government, which also subsidized its downstream oil sector, had already spent some $1.9 billion as of end-2004.

The Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry on Tuesday urged the government to consider reviving the OPSF and repealing RA 8479 or the Downstream Oil Industry Deregulation Act of 1998.

Energy Secretary Raphael Lotilla said the PCCI should submit its position to the five-person panel currently reviewing the Oil Deregulation Law.

"We have yet to receive such a proposal from PCCI. Any plans to revive the OPSF will have to be studied closely because the Oil Deregulation Law was passed to address the huge budget deficit incurred by the government arising from the application of the OPSF," he said in a statement yesterday. "By the time it was abolished in mid-1996, the government had owed the oil companies some P5 billion."

The OPSF was in place from 1987 to mid-1996 to absorb crude and foreign exchange fluctuations and to keep pump prices stable. Initially, the government provided the seed money for the fund, with local oil firms contributing to it when world oil prices were low and withdrawing from it when prices were high.

A sharp rise in world oil prices at that time, however, depleted the fund and left the government subsidizing fuel prices.

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Shares rise . . .

From page B1

least among them is Congress' delay in passing one of the most important tax reform bills."

SM Investments Corp., which made its debut at the stock exchange last week, was the most actively traded stock, falling P13 to P217 to leave it well down on its listing price of P250.

Manila Water Co. was second most active, down 20 centavos at P6.20 after it listed at P6.50.

Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. gained P20 to P1,390.

First Philippine Holdings rose P2.50 to P50 while Globe Telecom was up P5 at P875.

Ayala Corp. was up 50 centavos to P7.90, while its real estate unit Ayala Land rose 20 centavos to P8.20.

San Miguel Corp. "A" shares, limited to Filipino investors, were steady at P56 while San Miguel "B" shares, available to foreign investors, were unchanged at P81.50. *AFP*

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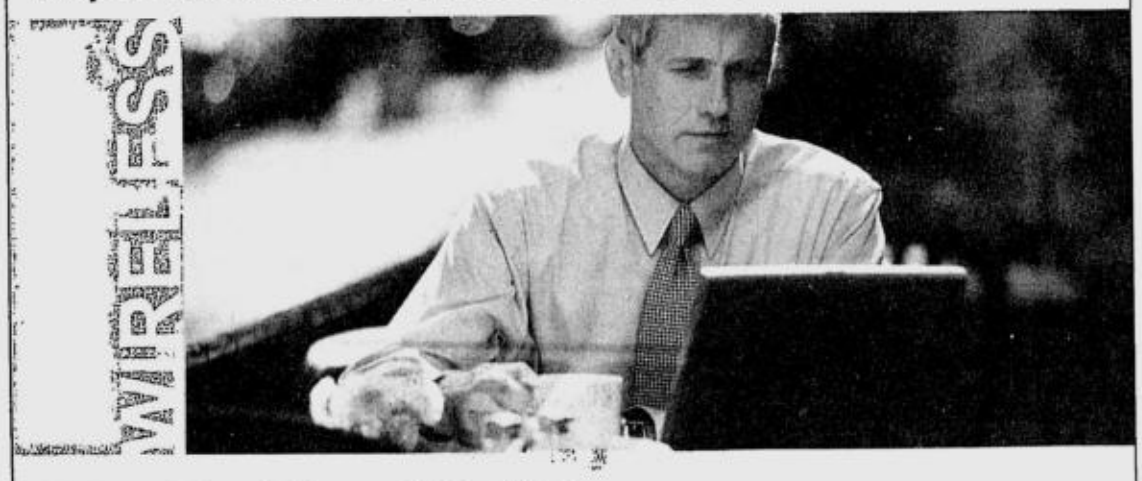

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VAT then again

BREAKTIME

Conrado R. Banal III

RIGHT away, we can sense that something is terribly wrong. All of a sudden, our lawmakers are holding a ... well, "special session."

Just imagine—congressmen and senators are working overtime. Without extra pay! I think.

Over the years, we have developed a sixth sense for congressional overtime. Somehow we have always known that it was about something bad.

I mean, come on, do you recall Congress ever holding one single "special session" just because this country was on the threshold of an economic boom?

Wherever Congress works overtime, we can be sure that something is terribly wrong. And more often than not, we are going to get it in the neck!

* * *

DON'T look now, but just when they are holding that special session, oil prices are suddenly fetching $57 a barrel in the international spot market.

Another good news is, the experts already agree that oil prices will continue to go up in the coming months, and not only that, the prices will stay up there in the next couple years.

They said it has something to do with demand. The world just uses up too much oil right now. Look, China used to export oil. That country is now one of the biggest buyers of oil and coal in the world market.

And so thanks to the increase in oil prices worldwide, we just have to suffer some more increases in the prices of fuel and electricity here.

From all indication, our electricity rates alone, as a result of the increase in oil prices abroad, will have to go up by close to P1 per kilowatt-hour sometime soon.

That's why Congress wants to work overtime. They want to hurry up the bill of this cash-hungry cute administration of Gloriaetta. It only seeks to raise the VAT rates.

That's the value-added tax, and our lawmakers want to figure out by how much more they can make us suffer by imposing VAT on—of all things—electricity.

Thank you so much, *mga bossing*.

* * *

CONGRESS is holding a special session, actually, because they want to debate some more on whether the VAT bill is good or bad.

When nobody was looking, you see, the House of Representatives, under the able leadership of Speaker Yoda Venecia, decided to slap us with VAT on electricity.

Under the present tax system, power generation is exempted from VAT, just like doctors, lawyers and other professionals. They do not pay for VAT.

By removing the VAT exemption on power, the House in effect merely put electricity in the same league as the Expedition, a trip to Hong Kong, and liposuction.

If you buy a luxury car, you pay a VAT. If you buy an airplane ticket, you pay a VAT. If you want to be as thin today as when you were 18, you pay a VAT.

Maybe our lawmakers believe that such a setup is not fair to those people in rural areas. How come only luxurious or frivolous consumption must bear the VAT burden?

People in the countryside, anyway, hardly buy those luxury items, mainly because they do not have the money. They therefore do not pay for a lot of VAT.

On the other hand, the rural folk use a little bit of electricity. Bingo! Let's impose VAT on electricity. Then this cute administration can tax the poor. Terrific!

* * *

AS of last count, we had something like 120 electric cooperatives all over the country. Based on official figures, together they had some 6.6 million customers.

Typically, a customer of an electric cooperative uses up electricity to light up three light bulbs. You know—they are that poor!

No wonder then, an average-sized (i.e. GIANT) shopping mall in the urban areas uses up as much electricity as the entire franchise area of an electric cooperative.

Now, we all know that if, thanks to its "special session," Congress decides to impose VAT on power, the cost of electricity can easily go up by 50 centavos per kwh.

In effect, the imposition of VAT on power means that the poor rural folk must carry the same burden as the super malls selling mostly imported items. How fair is that?

Yet, at the moment, this popularity-challenged cute administration of Gloriaetta is still busy subsidizing electricity rates.

It insists that the state-owned waste-champion Napocor should charge power rates that are much lower than the actual cost. Result: a yawning budget deficit.

And this stupid power subsidy is one of the main reasons why Congress wants to raise more taxes through VAT, in the first place.

Instead of removing the subsidy on power, therefore, our brave leaders would rather impose VAT on electricity. Who benefits the most? Hint: the malls!

* * *

BUT the biggest surprise of all came from Sen. Mar Roxas. He revealed recently that the tax take from VAT on electricity is now estimated at only P1.7 billion a year.

According to the good-looking, brilliant senator from Farmer's, este, from Capiz, the tax take in the beginning was estimated at P8 billion.

But then it went down to P5 billion, as Congress and business scrutinized the figures from the Department of Finance. And now it is down to P1.7 billion.

Nobody can say if the estimates only went down because, this early, even before VAT can be imposed on electricity, somebody is already cheating the government.

It's just that Roxas was trying to drive home a point—a very valid point. And that is, well, what he calls "cost-benefit." What do we trade off for the electricity VAT?

For an additional revenue of P1.7 billion a year, the electricity VAT will definitely derail the sale of the bankrupt and burdensome Napocor, for one, which is losing P80 billion a year.

But then again, because we are changing the rules in the middle of the game, the electricity VAT will drive away foreign investors.

Those are the things we must give up in return for the electricity VAT. And never mind the poor people in the country! For when did we ever care about them, anyway?

* * *

SOME 22 "new" nursing schools are up in arms against the CHEd, which is the nickname of the Commission on Higher Education, chaired by Rolando dela Rosa, a priest from the University of Santo Tomas.

The "new" schools already wrote angry letters to some senators and congressmen, asking for a congressional inquiry—in aid of whatever—on CHEd policies.

It seems Dela Rosa announced in media that CHEd would close down those 22 schools because of their alleged failure to comply with the many CHEd requirements.

But according to the 22 schools, such as the University of Perpetual Help (Manila) and the University of St. Louie (Tuguegarao, Cagayan), most of them have already complied with the CHEd rules.

And so why should CHEd threaten to close them down?

Well, those 22 schools have a little theory. To them, their closure can actually mean more business for other "old" schools in Metro Manila.

Look, they said in their letters to the lawmakers, the members of the CHEd's so-called Nursing Technical Committee all come from those schools.

I double-checked such a claim. It is true. The committee has two members from UP, one from UE, and one from FEU.

* * *

TO those 22 supposedly "new" nursing schools, instead of the CHEd's moving to close them down, the commission should instead close down those schools which produce "low quality" graduates.

You know—those whose graduates performed poorly in the nursing board examinations over the years.

Under the former chair of CHEd, Rolando Dizon, who is also a man of the cloth (from De La Salle University), "new" nursing schools were allowed to operate on a year-to-year basis.

The CHEd only imposed on them new requirements each year, apparently in an effort to help them meet the CHEd requirements gradually.

Under the present CHEd policy, those same schools must meet the CHEd requirements at once or else...

And everybody thought the friars have all gone!

* * *

ANYWAY, those 22 schools also claim that the CHEd is biased against private schools. For one, state universities are allowed to operate nursing schools, even if they have yet to comply with CHEd requirements.

Cited as examples in their letters were the Don Mariano Marcos Memorial State University and the Pangasinan State University.

To top it all, the CHEd chair refused to meet with representatives of those 22 "new" nursing schools, who even had to come to Manila from the provinces.

It seems that each school already invested a lot of money, even before they could operate. They already hired the personnel, for instance.

Most of the good ones are already leaving, since it seems to be taking CHEd forever to grant permits to the "new" schools.

According to those schools, the CHEd has given them only until the end of this school year and that's it. Which is around this time, actually.

PRESIDENTIAL Adviser for Energy Affairs Cesar T. Guy (center) receives the certificate of donation of X-IR Bunker-C Fuel Treatment worth P.25 Million from Nigel Mckenzie (right), chief operating officer of Quantum Global-Southeast Asia, and Harold Dick Ledda (right), president and CEO of Quantum Global Philippines.

Private firms not keen . . . From page B1

serving energy, in light of the unabated rise in prices of oil in the world market.

With the government taking the lead, he said he hoped that the private sector could also explore a similar initiative.

Energy Undersecretary Peter Anthony Abaya added that one of the objectives of the four-day workweek scheme was to pave the way for a working model that the private sector could follow.

On the part of the government, he said the new scheme would result in savings of as much as P144 million in electricity and fuel costs in the two months of its implementation.

The scheme could give the government a 14-percent savings in electricity use and another 18-percent savings in fuel consumption, he said. In the Department of Energy alone, Lotilla said savings of around P1.4 million was generated from September to December last year when the agency decided to implement some power conservation measures.

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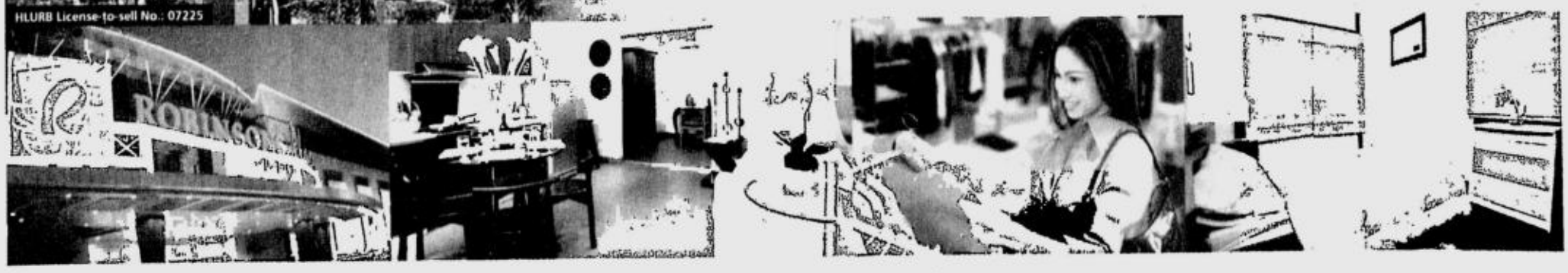

BSP ASSESSMENT

Peso seen improving with VAT

By Michelle V. Remo

THE BANGKO Sentral ng Pilipinas expects the peso to appreciate against the US dollar once Congress passes the bill reforming the value-added tax system.

Thus, the BSP will have to review its peso-dollar exchange rate target for the year, which currently stands at between 55 and 57 to the US dollar.

BSP Deputy Governor Amando Tetangco Jr. said the peso could even beat the lower end of the original target of 55 to a dollar if government pushes through with its fiscal reform program, especially the VAT.

"But that will also depend on how the dollar will behave. But if the dollar will be neutral, then the peso will definitely be better than the target," he said.

Tetangco said market players were keenly watching the progress of the VAT bill, and were ready to respond positively when it passes Congress.

"If the VAT is passed, it will have a positive impact on the movement of the peso. The target will have to be reviewed," Tetangco said in an interview with reporters during the launching of Asia United Bank's new product, called the Bizkit Checking Account.

Earlier, the BSP stressed the urgency and of accomplishing the fiscal reform programs of the Arroyo administration, warning that the country could experience capital flight, which would bring down the value of the peso against the US dollar.

The BSP said the government should not shrug off possibilities of capital flight, especially now that US interest rates are on the rise.

An increase in US interest rates typically lead to the withdrawal of funds from the more risky capital markets.

Thus, investors could take away investments from the Philippines and move the funds to the United States.

But as of latest record, portfolio investments in the country remained robust.

In January and February alone, portfolio investment already reached $796 million, surpassing the $488.8 million recorded for the whole of 2004.

Tetangco also expressed confidence that despite debates against the VAT reform in Congress, legislators would eventually approve it.

Both houses of Congress begin today a three-day special session to deliberate on the VAT bill.

The Arroyo administration is pushing for a hike in the VAT rate from 10 to 12 percent, and the lifting of several VAT exemptions, including services rendered by lawyers and doctors.

Tetangco said the progress of the Arroyo administration's programs to reform the fiscal sector was one of the major determinants of the peso's behavior.

He said the peso's depreciation early this week, after posting gains, would be reversed once the VAT bill is passed.

The peso closed at P54.48 on Monday and P54.65 on Tuesday.

Tetangco explained that the weakening of the peso was also caused by the strengthening of the US economy.

Bacnotan eyes investments in medical sector

BACNOTAN Consolidated Industries Inc. (BCII), the flagship company of the Phinma Group, said it was looking into the medical services business as part of its strategy to diversify into the services sector.

Sources told the INQUIRER that the Phinma Group was conducting due diligence studies on a hospital, but declined to identify its target.

It will complete its due diligence in a month or two and was looking at acquiring a big stake in the hospital.

Separately, BCII said in a disclosure that it planned to acquire a network of three to five colleges and universities with a total student population of 50,000 to 75,000.

BCII has already invested in Araullo University in Cabanatuan City, and was negotiating the terms for the purchase of a controlling interest in Cagayan de Oro College Inc.

AU has 6,000 students and has recently undergone a P64-million upgrade of its facilities.

BCII is also evaluating the possibility of investing in another school in Iloilo.

The acquisitions are part of BCII's strategy to diversify its portfolio to cover the services sector, including education, energy, financial services and affordable housing.

The Philippine Investment-Management, Inc. (Phinma) Group is re-engineering its flagship company into a services-oriented firm, encouraged by the prospects of the sector becoming a key driver of the economy.

Aside from educational services, the Phinma Group has interests in steel, power generation and oil exploration, low-cost housing development, and financial services.

BCII recently unloaded its entire cement interest to Cemco Holdings, a subsidiary of Switzerland's Holcim Ltd., saying it could no longer stay competitive in the cement industry.

BCII and unit Atlas Cement Corp. sold their combined 51-percent stake in Union Cement Holdings, a major shareholder of Union Cement. *Elizabeth L. Sanchez*

Anscor '05 income hit P505M

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

HOLDING firm A. Soriano Corp. recorded a 28-percent increase in net income to P505 million last year, from P393 million in 2003, due to the improvement in the operations of different business lines.

Anscor said in a report to the Securities and Exchange Commission that its subsidiary, International Container Terminal Services Inc. (ICTSI), doubled its income last year to P1.06 billion, from P528 million in 2003.

This made an impact on Anscor's total financial picture as ICTSI accounts for the bulk of the holding firm's revenues.

Also recording a stellar performance was wire and cable manufacturer Phelps Dodge Phils. Energy Products Corp. (PDP Energy), which also doubled its net income last year to P116 million, from 2003's P57 million.

Seven Seas Resorts and Leisure Inc., which owns the Amanpulo Resort, also improved its performance last year.

After three years of losses and low occupancy levels due to travel warnings and security concerns, Amanpulo's occupancy rate improved to 35 percent last year from 22 percent in 2003.

This produced an income of P43 million, an improvement of P88 million from 2003's loss of about P45 million.

Island Aviation Inc., which services Amanpulo's clients, likewise increased income last year and earned extra from its outside charter business.

SPI Technologies Inc., meanwhile, achieved record revenues of P3 billion last year, 40 percent higher than the previous year due to its publisher services and new businesses, namely electronic data discovery, healthcare and transaction services.

Gross profit grew 47 percent to P1.4 billion.

SPI's earnings before interest, taxes and depreciation were down 19 percent to P517 million due to an increase in operating costs.

E-Telecare International Inc., a spin-off in 2003 from SPI, continued to grow organically and has evolved into an international call center with the acquisition of a US company.

SPI revenues in 2004 reached P5.5 billion from P1.7 billion in 2003, while operating income rose to P379 million from P314 million.

Anscor owns 8 percent of E-Telecare.

On the other hand, KSA Realty Corp. ended last year with a lower income due to higher interest costs.

In line with Anscor's strategy to consider potential profitable investments in the services sector, Anscor hiked its stake in Multi-Media Telephony Inc. (MTI) and acquired a majority position in a nurse-recruitment company called International Quality Manpower Services Inc. which is based in the Philippines but has a sales office in Houston, Texas.

Anscor invested P109 million in MTI bringing its total investment to P149 million, representing a 27-percent stake.

It has committed to invest a total of P84 million in IQMAN, which will give it a 60-percent share in the company upon final infusion of funds by June this year.

MRT SIGNS IN TRACKWORKS. MRT recently signed a 10-year exclusive marketing franchise with Trackworks for the advertising along MRT-3. Travelling along the key business and retail stops along Edsa, the MRT-3 line is a major marketing venue with 450,000 passengers carried daily, resulting in 900,000 daily ad impressions. From left: Rafael Perez de Tagle, MRT Devco executive vice president; Bob Sobrepeña, MRT Devco chair and CEO; Lino Marable, Trackworks president and CEO; and Leo Gueco, Trackworks business development head.

Highlands 2004 profit up 200%

HIGHLANDS Prime Inc., a publicly listed high-end property development company majority-owned by the SM Group, posted a 36-percent increase in revenue last year to P595 million and a 200-percent rise in net income after tax to P126 million, from only P43 million in 2003.

The company attributed the growth to the warm response of the market to its maiden project, The Woodridge at Tagaytay Highlands, and its efficient management of costs.

The sale of Woodridge units generated more than P1.3 billion in sales to date. As of end March 2005, all the units in the first six completed buildings were sold out.

Highlands is now completing the seventh building, which is now 60 percent sold.

Increases in sales of lots facing Taal lake at the Lakeview Heights subdivision in Tagaytay Midlands, also contributed to the significant revenue increase last year.

Due to increasing demand for more residential units in Tagaytay Highlands and Tagaytay Midlands, the company has lined up new projects for this year.

In January this year, HPI launched The Horizon, a mid-rise residential condominium development at the Tagaytay Midlands. The project stands on a nine-hectare property facing the 18-hole Tagaytay Midlands golf course, Taal lake/ volcano and Mt. Makiling. Its first phase is approximately 5.8 hectares composed of 12 cluster buildings or 220 four-bedroom units. Each unit will have a floor area of 137-150 square meters.

Firm ships nickel to Japan

SINGAPORE—Coral Bay Nickel Corp. has shipped the first powder from a new plant in the Philippines to its Japanese parent company, Sumitomo Metal Mining Co. Ltd., an official involved in the project said on Wednesday.

Coral Bay will deliver nickel powder to Sumitomo Metal Mining's Niihama refinery in Japan, where it will be processed into the metal that gives strength and sheen to stainless steel.

"The first nickel has been shipped out. It's still on the way to Japan," the official told Reuters.

"It will take 10 to 14 days to arrive," he said, adding the powder was shipped out at the end of last week.

Asia's booming stainless steel sector has helped drive nickel prices up more than 5 percent this year. The world consumes more of the anti-corrosive metal than it produces, although analysts see supply and demand coming into balance this year.

Coral Bay has capacity to produce 10,000 tons of nickel and 700 to 800 tons of cobalt annually. It aimed to reach this level of production by 2006 at the earliest, the official said.

The plant, on Palawan island in the western Philippines, has been carrying out test runs since the fourth quarter of last year. It uses a hydrometallurgical process to make nickel and cobalt in a mixed sulphide powder, an intermediary product that is turned into metal in Japan.

Sumitomo Metal Mining owns 54 percent of Coral Bay. Its Japanese partners, Mitsui and Co. and Sojitz Corp., each have an 18 percent stake.

Rio Tuba Nickel Mining Corp., with 10 percent, is the Philippine partner in the project. The company has been mining nickel ore on Palawan for more than 20 years.

World nickel output and consumption are seen roughly in balance this year at about 1.32 million tons, from a deficit of 40,000 tons in 2003, the International Nickel Study Group said in October.

Nickel for three-month delivery on the London Metal Exchange closed on Tuesday at $15,525 a ton.

Cobalt prices rose nearly 6 percent on Tuesday, on top of last week's 11.5 percent gain, on frenetic buying by end-users, many of whom are in Japan.

The metal, used in high-tech superalloys for the aerospace sector, was trading at $18/$18.75 a pound, the highest since Feb. 10. *Reuters*

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of March 30, 2005)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
BANKS & FINANCIAL SERVICES					
BANKS					
Asiatrust Dev. Bank Inc.	4	4	3.85	4	28,000
Banco de Oro Univ. Bank	25.5	26	25	26	618,900
Bank of the Phil. Islands	53	53	50.5	51	1,517,300
China Banking Corp.	650	650	650	650	60
Citystate Savings Bank	17.25	17.5	17.25	17.5	1,701,000
Export and Ind. Bank Inc.	0.65	0.71	0.6	0.71	5,550,000
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	45	46.5	44	46	198,700
International Exch. Bank	18	18.25	18	18	198,300
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	35	35.5	33	34	324,400
Philippine National Bank	32	33.5	31	33.5	114,300
Rizal Comm. Banking Corp.	14	14	14	14	8,400
Security Bank Corp.	26.5	27	26.5	27	250,000
Union Bank of the Phil.	27.5	28	27	28	65,700
FINANCIAL SERVICES					
First Metro Invest. Corp.	250	250	250	250	300
Manulife Financial Corp.	2510	2510	2510	2510	470
PCI Leasing & Fin. Inc.	1.06	1.1	1.04	1.1	1,074,000
Phil. Stock Exchange Inc.	145	145	145	145	690
Sun Life Financial Inc.	1725	1725	1725	1725	710
COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL					
COMMUNICATION					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	15	15.75	14.5	15.75	38,900
Digital Telecom Phils Inc.	1.12	1.18	1.08	1.16	16,572,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	865	875	865	875	97,600
Ipeople Inc.	4.5	4.6	4.45	4.55	305,000
Island Info and Tech Inc.	0.05	0.05	0.05	0.05	400,000
ISM Communications Corp.	0.045	0.049	0.045	0.049	10,000,000
Manila Bulletin Pub. Corp.	2	2	2	2	68,000
Pilipino Tel. Corp.	3.25	3.35	3.15	3.35	5,595,000
Transpacific Broadcast	1.4	1.4	1.4	1.4	30,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	1360	1400	1350	1390	172,530
Ivantage Corp.	0.71	0.74	0.7	0.74	1,940,000
Philweb Corp.	0.019	0.02	0.017	0.02	166,100,000
POWER, ENERGY & OTHER UTILITIES					
Manila Electric Co. A	18	18	17.75	18	58,100
Manila Electric Co. B	25.5	26	25	26	1,152,100
Manila Water Co. Inc.	6.3	6.3	6.1	6.2	44,781,000
Petron Corp.	3.45	3.55	3.4	3.5	4,724,000
Salcon Power Corp.	2	2	2	2	10,000
Trans-Asia Oil and Energy	1.2	1.3	1.2	1.3	141,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Aboitiz Trans. Sys. Corp.	1.72	1.72	1.72	1.72	25,000
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	7.2	7.5	7.2	7.5	401,000
Keppel Phils. Marine, Inc.	0.54	0.54	0.52	0.54	290,000
Lorenzo Shipping Corp.	1.06	1.22	1	1.02	2,166,000
CONSTRUCTION & OTHER RELATED PRODUCTS					
Engineering Equip. Inc.	0.55	0.6	0.55	0.6	570,000
Holcim Philippines Inc.	3.45	3.7	3.35	3.65	3,443,000
Republic Glass Hldg. Corp.	1.7	1.7	1.7	1.7	261,000
FOOD, BEVERAGES & TOBACCO					
Ginebra San Miguel Inc.	35	35	34.5	35	114,900
Jollibee Foods Corp.	26.5	28.5	26.5	28.5	807,200
RFM Corp.	0.92	0.95	0.9	0.95	350,000
Swift Food Inc.	0.35	0.35	0.35	0.35	20,000
San Miguel Corp. A	55.5	56	55.5	56	322,700
San Miguel Corp. B	81	81.5	81	81.5	74,000
Universal Robina Corp.	12.25	12.25	12.25	12.25	398,200
Vitarich Corp.	0.29	0.29	0.28	0.29	540,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Abacus Con Res & Hdg A	0.0095	0.0095	0.0095	0.0095	22,000,000
Abacus Con Res & Hdg B	0.011	0.011	0.01	0.01	5,000,000
Ayala Corp.	7.3	8	7.3	7.9	9,033,000
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	4.3	4.5	4.05	4.5	1,491,000
Ajo Net Holdings Inc.	0.046	0.047	0.044	0.047	10,800,000
A. Soriano Corp.	1.92	1.96	1.84	1.94	2,229,000
APC Group Inc.	0.35	0.41	0.35	0.4	1,580,000
Alcorn Gold Res. Corp.	0.0065	0.007	0.0065	0.007	114,000,000
Anglo Phil Holdings Corp.	0.44	0.44	0.44	0.44	200,000
Bacnotan Cons Indus Inc.	15	15	15	15	1,604,000
Boulevard Holdings Inc.	0.145	0.16	0.145	0.16	200,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	1.04	1.08	0.97	1.08	73,982,000
A Brown Co. Inc.	0.95	0.95	0.95	0.95	50,000
Crown Equities Inc.	0.225	0.235	0.225	0.235	1,400,000
Southeast Asian Cement	0.41	0.44	0.41	0.44	810,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	3.2	3.55	3.15	3.35	4,730,000
Filinvest Dev. Corp.	1.3	1.48	1.3	1.48	46,000
Fil-Hispano Holdings Corp.	9	9.2	8.9	9.1	785,000
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	47	50.5	45	50	2,045,500
Forum Pacific Inc.	0.23	0.23	0.23	0.23	350,000
Global Equities Inc.	0.095	0.105	0.095	0.105	16,500,000
House of Investments Inc.	1.56	1.58	1.56	1.58	110,000
Ionics Inc.	1.5	1.52	1.48	1.52	399,000
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc.	3.5	3.5	3.4	3.5	221,000
Macroasia Corp.	2	2	2	2	20,000
Megaworld Corp.	1.38	1.4	1.28	1.38	6,131,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.46	0.48	0.42	0.48	49,680,000
Solid Group Inc.	0.56	0.56	0.56	0.56	200,000
SM Investments Corp.	228	228	216	217	2,565,170
South China Resources Inc.	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.7	250,000
Tanduay Holdings Inc.	2.9	2.9	2.9	2.9	50,000
Uniwide Holdings Inc.	0.16	0.16	0.16	0.16	2,200,000
Waterfront Phils. Inc.	0.27	0.29	0.27	0.29	1,690,000
MANUFACTURING, DISTRIBUTION & TRADING					
Music Semiconductors Corp.	1.64	1.72	1.64	1.66	57,000
Mabuhay Vinyl Corp.	0.88	0.92	0.88	0.92	20,000
Picop Resources Inc.	0.12	0.13	0.115	0.13	2,770,000
HOTEL, RECREATION & OTHER SERVICES					
Belle Corp.	1.24	1.34	1.2	1.3	9,421,000
Fairmont Holdings Inc.	0.91	1.02	0.91	1.02	620,000
Leisure & Resorts Corp.	1.48	1.48	1.36	1.46	5,970,000
Premiere Ent. Prod. Inc.	0.28	0.29	0.27	0.29	3,400,000
Philippine Racing Club	3	3	3	3	11,000
BONDS, PREFERRED & WARRANTS					
ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp (Pdr)	14.75	15.25	14.75	15.25	781,200
PLDT (10% Pref) Series S	10.25	10.25	10.25	10.25	100
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	7.9	8.2	7.8	8.2	7,964,000
Cebu Holdings Inc.	0.9	0.99	0.9	0.98	870,000
C&P Homes Inc.	0.27	0.29	0.26	0.29	1,600,000
Cyber Bay Corp.	0.26	0.27	0.25	0.25	2,800,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.45	0.47	0.44	0.47	25,260,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	1.44	1.44	1.28	1.4	47,683,000
Gotesco Land Inc.	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	20,000
Kuok Phil. Properties	0.24	0.27	0.24	0.27	140,000
Fil-Estate Land, Inc.	0.68	0.68	0.68	0.68	380,000
Philippine Estates Corp.	0.175	0.18	0.175	0.18	350,000
Robinsons Land Corp.	4.5	4.75	4.3	4.75	890,000
Phil Realty and Holdings	0.24	0.25	0.24	0.25	390,000
SM Development Corp.	1.5	1.68	1.5	1.68	40,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	7.6	7.8	7.4	7.7	9,061,000
MINING					
Abra Mining & Industrial	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	113,000,000
Atlas Cons. Min & Dev't	5.4	5.4	5.1	5.4	307,000
Benguet Corp. B	23.5	23.5	23.5	23.5	1,600
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A	0.38	0.38	0.34	0.35	3,360,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co B	0.38	0.39	0.36	0.39	8,900,000
Manila Mining Corp. A	0.015	0.016	0.014	0.016	98,400,000
Manila Mining Corp. B	0.02	0.021	0.018	0.02	380,500,000
Omico Corp.	0.007	0.008	0.0065	0.008	315,000,000
Philex Mining Corp. A	1.14	1.14	1.12	1.14	2,215,000
Philex Mining Corp. B	1.22	1.34	1.22	1.32	3,351,000
Semirara Mining Corp.	38	39	37	38.5	808,000
OIL					
Interport Res. B	0.0055	0.0055	0.005	0.005	17,000,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. A	0.006	0.006	0.0055	0.006	247,000,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. B	0.006	0.006	0.006	0.006	17,000,000
Petroenergy Res. Corp.	2.7	2.75	2.65	2.65	69,000
Sinophil Corp.	0.17	0.185	0.155	0.185	6,740,000
Vulcan Ind'l	0.32	0.34	0.32	0.34	40,000

DISCLOSURES

MARIWASA Manufacturing Inc. will hold its annual stockholders' meeting on May 26, 10:30 a.m. at The Peninsula Manila Hotel, Ayala Avenue corner Makati Avenue Makati City. Only stockholders of record as of April 26 are entitled to notice of and to vote at the meeting.

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CITYSTATE Savings Bank Inc. will hold its annual stockholders' meeting on May 31, 2 p.m. at the 20th Floor, Citystate Center Building, 709 Shaw Blvd., Pasig City. Only stockholders as of April 15 are entitled to notice of and to vote at the meeting.

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PHILEX Mining Corp. will hold its annual stockholders' meeting on June 28, 2 p.m. at Manansala AB Function, 4th Floor, Holiday Inn Manila Galeria, ADB Avenue Ortigas Center, Pasig City. Only stockholders as of April 14 are entitled to notice of and vote at the meeting. The record books of the corporation will be closed from April 15 to 21. *Compiled by Chona Galang, PDI Research*

CURRENCIES

March 30, 2005 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.773575	1.000000	54.6340
Japan	Yen	0.007195	0.009301	0.5082
United Kingdom	Pound	1.449602	1.873900	102.3787
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.099182	0.128212	7.0047
Switzerland	Franc	0.643520	0.831878	45.4488
Canada	Dollar	0.638579	0.825491	44.0999
Singapore	Dollar	0.468294	0.605364	33.0735
Australia	Dollar	0.597125	0.771903	42.1721
Bahrain	Dinar*	2.052031	2.652661	144.9255
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.206281	0.266660	14.5687
Brunei	Dollar	0.466881	0.603537	32.9736
Indonesia	Ruplah	0.000081	0.000105	0.0057
Thailand	Baht	0.019679	0.025439	1.3898
UAE	Dirham	0.210623	0.272272	14.8753
Euro	Euro	1.000000	1.292700	70.6254
Argentina	Peso	0.265150	0.342759	18.7263
Brazil	Real	0.285948	0.369645	20.1952
Denmark	Kroner	0.134271	0.173572	9.4829
India	Rupee	0.017702	0.022883	1.2502
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.203599	0.263193	14.3793
Mexico	New Peso	0.068668	0.088767	4.8497
New Zealand	Dollar	0.550391	0.711491	38.8716
Norway	Kroner	0.121911	0.157594	8.6100
Pakistan	Rupee	0.013032	0.016846	0.9204
South Africa	Rand	0.122206	0.157978	8.6310
Korea	Won	0.000756	0.000977	0.0534
Sweden	Kroner	0.109540	0.141603	7.7363
Syria	Pound	0.014902	0.019264	1.0525
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.024378	0.031514	1.7217
Venezuela	Bolivar	0.000360	0.000466	0.0255

Japan industrial output fell in February on weak exports

TOKYO—Japan's industrial production fell by more than expected in February, pushed down by weak exports, adding to a slew of recent sluggish figures that have dampened hopes for a quick turnaround in the economy.

Industrial output in February fell 2.1 percent from a month earlier, the government said on Wednesday, below a median market forecast of a 1.1 percent fall and helped by declines in the production of semiconductor machinery and personal computers.

Economists blamed weak exports in February for the slower production and focused more on the outlook for March and April.

"It wasn't too surprising, given the big drop in exports during the month, and exports are still the key driver of production growth," said Peter Morgan, senior economist at HSBC Securities.

Manufacturers' output—the core component of production—was expected to rise 0.9 percent in March and to increase 3.6 percent in April, the data from the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry showed.

Export growth has been a key factor for industrial output.

But Japan's trade surplus shrank in February from a year earlier for the second month in a row as exports to crucial markets weakened.

"There were some worries after the February trade data that exports were weakening, but the figures today seem to suggest that it may just have been a one-off dip," said Seiji Adachi, senior economist at Deutsche Securities.

The ministry maintained its assessment of industrial output, saying it was in a flat trend.

The weak figure helped to push up the dollar to around 107.70 yen, hitting a five-month high for a third straight session before quickly falling back to around 107.50 yen.

Other data, including sluggish jobs and wage figures on Tuesday, have made markets cautious after surprisingly strong readings for January raised hopes for an early economic rebound. *Reuters*

Crude futures move higher as Opec suspends talks

SINGAPORE—Crude futures gained only slightly on Wednesday, staying above $54 a barrel after the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries said it has suspended talks on a second output increase.

Light, sweet crude on the New York Mercantile Exchange rose 5 cents to $54.28 a barrel, midmorning in Asia. Heating oil rose marginally to $1.56 a gallon (3.8 liters).

Opec president Sheik Ahmed Fahd al Ahmed Al Sabah, who is also the oil minister of Kuwait, said in Doha, Qatar, on Tuesday that the cartel would be watching oil prices to determine whether another increase in production is necessary.

"We will resume talks once oil prices increase," Al Sabah said. "We have to be patient during this time and for the second quarter because prices have not increased, but I believe there will be an increase in production at the end of the second quarter because the market will need it."

His comments assured traders that the producers' group no longer feared an immediate supply crunch.

"The comments from Opec has put a cap on any upward price movements," said energy analyst Daniel Hynes of ANZ Bank in Melbourne, Australia.

Opec agreed earlier this month to raise production quotas by 500,000 barrels per day and said it would consult on whether to increase them by a further 500,000 if prices continued to rise.

Still, Al Sabah warned that demand could grow another 2.2 million barrels a day this year, reflecting not only the high demands of the summer driving season in the Northern Hemisphere but continuing world economic growth.

Opec will need to pump 28.5 million barrels a day in the summer, an increase of 1 million barrels a day from current output, he said.

Al Sabah also cautioned that daily demand could rise as high as 33.3 million barrels in the peak winter months, providing support to prices.

Worldwide demand is forecast by the International Energy Agency to rise 2.2 percent this year to 84.3 million barrels a day.

Meanwhile, traders awaited the upcoming energy supply report from the United States, which they expect will show a rise in crude oil inventories. *AP*

Weak Japan, US data weigh on Asia stocks

SINGAPORE—The dollar hit a fresh five-month high against the yen before retreating in Asia on Wednesday and Asian stocks sagged in the wake of weak US consumer confidence data and poor Japanese production figures.

European share markets were expected to open sharply lower after higher oil prices and disappointing data sent US stocks to new 2005 lows.

The softer-than-expected reading for Japanese industrial production in February lifted the dollar to 107.69 yen.

While the government said it expected output to rebound, which helped the yen recoup its losses, traders said the trend was intact.

The Nikkei average fell 0.29 percent, led by selling in banks such as Mizuho Financial Group, Japan's biggest bank by assets. Mizuho fell 3.1 percent. Japanese government debt prices sagged as traders locked in recent profits.

A fall in US consumer confidence to its lowest level since November weighed on Asian exporters such as Sony Corp., which lost 0.9 percent.

MSCI's index of non-Japan Asian shares lost about a tenth of a percent by 0610 GMT.

US stocks fell to new lows for the year. The Dow Jones Industrial average sank 0.76 percent, while the Nasdaq composite index dropped 0.94 percent.

Seoul shares fell 0.4 percent to their lowest in more than six weeks, led by major exporters such as Hyundai Motor Co.

Hong Kong's Hang Seng Index inched higher in morning trade, Taiwan's weighted index and Australia's S&P ASX 200 closed a fraction of a percent lower. *Reuters*

MCI accepts Verizon bid

NEW YORK—MCI Inc. accepted a sweetened $7.64 billion (euro 5.91 billion) takeover proposal from Verizon Communications Inc. on Tuesday that raises the price tag by $1 billion (euro770 million), but is still nearly a billion dollars shy of the latest bid for the long-distance phone company from Qwest Communications International Inc.

The new offer from Verizon increases the amount of cash being paid and provides protection against a possible decline in the value of the Verizon shares MCI investors will receive, the companies said in a statement.

Qwest said it will reassess the situation, but reiterated its position that it has submitted a superior offer valuing MCI $8.45 billion (euro 6.54 billion), or $26 (euro 20) per share.

Verizon has now agreed to pay $23.50 for each MCI share, consisting of Verizon stock worth at least $14.75 and $8.75 in cash.

In the original deal reached by Verizon and MCI in mid-February, Verizon was to pay $14.75 in stock and $6 cash for each MCI share.

Both the Verizon and Qwest offers include a 40-cent cash dividend paid by MCI to its shareholders earlier this month, as well as future MCI dividends scheduled to be paid before the proposed deal is completed.

MCI said that in making its determination, its board of directors considered the need for Verizon's size, resources, reputation with customers, and wireless capabilities as key to survival in the telecommunications market.

"MCI's board has been closely and carefully evaluating all of the recent developments," Nicholas deB. Katzenbach, MCI's chair, said in a statement.

"We believe Verizon's substantial increase in its offer, the strength of its competitive position and the financial certainty at close make this offer compelling to our shareholders, customers and employees."

MCI shares rose 89 cents, or 3.9 percent, to $23.83 on the Nasdaq Stock Market. Verizon's stock rose 64 cents per share, or 1.8 percent, to $35.36 in morning trading on the New York Stock Exchange, where Qwest fell 7 cents, or 1.9 percent, to $3.68. *AP*

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Lot1&2 R. Ballesteros & R. Ballesteros Ext Sts., Brgy Alabug, Tuao
Minimum Bid Price P 4,356,129.00

Lot 3 – Res'l. Lots LA 2,000 sqm
L4641-C&D InteriorLot, Tallungan Aparri
Minimum Bid Price P 225,000.00

Lot 4 –Res'l./Agri. Lot LA 9,855 sqm
Lot4707 National Rd., Tallungan, Aparri
Minimum Bid Price P 4,447,036.00

Lot 5 – Res'l. Lot LA 6,203 sqm
Lot2449-C-2 Maharlika Highway, Dacal La Fugu, Camalaniugan
Minimum Bid Price P 3,503,530.00

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Lot 6–Res'l/Comm'l Lots w/Imprvmnt LA 987 sqm
Maharlika Highway, Poblacion Cordon (across Javonillo Hospital)
Minimum Bid Price P 850,725.00

Lot 7 - Res'l Lot LA 2,000 sqm
Corpuz St, Gayong-gayong, Cordon
Minimum Bid Price P 382,500.00

Lot 8 - Res'l. Lot w/ Imprvmnt LA 1,366sqm, FA 240sqm
Lot21271 Nat'l. Highway, Gayong-gayong, Cordon
Minimum Bid Price P 1,285,564.00

Lot 9-Res'l/Comm'l Lot w/Imprvmnt LA 1,402sqm, FA 276sqm
Lot548-A&B Turingan cor Bachelor Sts. Dubinan East, Santiago City
Minimum Bid Price P 5,608,000.00

Lot 10 - Res'l. Lot LA 800 sqm
Lot3559-L-10 Baquirin St, Purok 2, Patul, Santiago City
Minimum Bid Price P 300,000.00

Lot 11 - Res'l. Lot w/ Imprvmnt LA 1,341 sqm Lot1328-A Ramirez cor Dadoral Sts. Brgy.Rizal,SantiagoCity
Minimum Bid Price P 1,475,100.00

Lot 12 – Res'l. Lot w/ Imprvmnt LA 730sqm, FA 71sqm
Lot798-H-2 Provincial Rd, Purok 4, Brgy. Baluarte, Santiago City
Minimum Bid Price P 546,860.00

Lot 13 – Res'l. Lot LA 2,941 sqm
Lot376-E Padua St, Dubinan West, Santiago City
Minimum Bid Price P 1,999,880.00

Lot 14 – Res'l. Lot LA 300 sqm
Brgy. Road, Plaridel, Santiago City
Minimum Bid Price P 210,000.00

Lot 15 – Res'l Lots LA 432 sqm
L172-D-4-E&D Buenavista, SantiagoCity
Minimum Bid Price P 205,600.00

Lot 16 – Res'l Lot LA 3,176 sqm
Lot260-D Mabini & Arellano Ext., Dubinan East, Santiago City
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Lot 17 –Res'l Industrial Lot w/ Imprvmnt LA 15,796 sqm Lot1 National Highway, Quezon, San Isidro
Minimum Bid Price P 3,719,700.00

Lot 18-Res'l Lots w/ Imprvmnt LA 1,200sqm, FA 110sqm
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Minimum Bid Price P 525,000.00

Lot 19 - Res'l. Lot LA 500 sqm
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Lot 20 – Res'l. Lot LA 638 sqm
L5637-B-6 National Road, Ipil, Echague
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Lot 21-Res'l/Comm'l Lot w/ Imprvmnt LA 10,000sqm, FA 175sqm
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Lot 22 – Res'l. Lot LA 3,605 sqm
Lot13-B Brgy. Poblacion, San Antonio,Alicia
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Lot 23 - Res'l. Lot LA 1,000sqm
Lot45-E Brgy. Apanay, Alicia
Minimum Bid Price P 650,000.00

Lot 24-Res'l/Comm'l Lot w/Imprvmnt LA 2,899sqm, FA 545.70sqm
Quirino cor Maharlika Highway, San Antonio, Alicia
Minimum Bid Price P 4,348,500.00

Lot 25 - Res'l. Lot LA 9,029 sqm
Brgy. Mabini, Alicia
Minimum Bid Price P 1,625,220.00

Lot 26 -Res'l. Lot LA 159 sqm
Cortez St. Barrio District II, Cauayan City
Minimum Bid Price P 675,750.00

Lot 27 – Res'l. Lot LA 9,742 sqm
LotB-1 Brgy. Rd,Brgy. Nungnungan I, Cauayan
Minimum Bid Price P 636,038.00

Lot 28 - Res'l. Lot LA 357 sqm
Brgy. San Fermin, Cauayan City
Minimum Bid Price P 357,000.00

Lot 29–Res'l/Comm'l Lot w/Imprvmnt LA 2,503sqm, FA 750sqm
L15 Blk2 & L15-20 Blk3 (Formerly Queen of the Valley Gen. Hospital) Maharlika Highway, Tagaran, Cauayan
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Lot 30 – Res'l. Lots LA 2,233 sqm
Brgy. Road, Alicaocao, Cauayan City
Minimum Bid Price P 1,898,050.00

Lot 31 – Res'l. Lot LA 630 sqm
Brgy. San Fermin, Cauayan City
Minimum Bid Price P 504,000.00

Lot 32 – Agri. Lot w/ Imprvmnt LA 10,000sqm, FA 960sqm
Lot2-A Tagaran, Cauayan City
Minimum Bid Price P 750,000.00

Lot 33–Res'l/Comm'l Lot w/Imprvmnt LA 5,000sqm, FA 150sqm
LotA-2 Maharlika Highway, Tagaran, Cauayan City (near GSIS Bldg.)
Minimum Bid Price P 3,704,583.00

Lot 34 – Res'l. Lots LA 733 sqm
Lots4-O&N Brgy. Paraiso, Cabaruan, Cauayan City
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Res'l. Lot, Maharlika Homes Subd., Cauayan City
Lot 35 – L14 Blk7 LA 300 sqm
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Lot 36 – L20 Blk5 LA 300 sqm
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Lot 37 - Res'l. Lot LA 924 sqm
Lot10027-C-3-B Brgy. Tagaran, Cauayan City
Minimum Bid Price P 470,900.00

Lot 38 – Res'l. Lot LA 924 sqm
Lot10027-C-3-C-1 Brgy. Tagaran, Cauayan City
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Lot 39 – Res'l. Lot w/ Imprvmnt LA 745sqm, FA 350sqm
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ISABELA

Lot 40-Res'l/Comm'l Lot LA6,557sqm
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Lot 41– Res'l. Lots LA 5,000 sqm
Lot3562-E-2-B to F Barrio rd, La Paz, Cabatuan
Minimum Bid Price P 1,125,000.00

Lot 42 - Res'l/Comm'l Lot w/ Imprvmnt LA 313 sqm, FA 72sqm
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Lot 44 - Res'l Lot LA 901 sqm
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Lot 46–Res'l/Comm'l Lot LA 669sqm
Lot7675 cor Bantug Ave. & Gen. Luna St, Bantug, Roxas
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Lot 47 - Res'l. Lot LA 416 sqm
L7 Blk1 Rd. lot1, RubySubd.Vira,Roxas
Minimum Bid Price P 582,400.00

Lot 48 – Res'l. Lot LA 240 sqm
L5 Blk2 National Rd., Brgy. Vira, Roxas
Minimum Bid Price P 240,000.00

Lot 49 – Res'l. Lot LA 398sqm
Lot4778-F-4-A-4-C, Brgy. Rizal, Roxas
Minimum Bid Price P 478,800.00

Lot 50 - Res'l. Lot LA 250 sqm
Lot7852-B-1 Claro M. Recto St. Brgy. Rizal, Roxas
Minimum Bid Price P 1,000,000.00

Lot 51 – Res'l. Lot LA 350 sqm
Lot6-A Brgy. Magsaysay, Naguilian
Minimum Bid Price P 148,750.00

Lot 52 – Res'l. Lot w/ Imprvmnt LA 510 sqm, FA 182.50 sqm
Lot4543-C-1 National Rd., Brgy. Magsaysay, Naguilian
Minimum Bid Price P 714,000.00

Lot 53 – Res'l. Lot LA 6,763sqm
Provincial Rd, Brgy. Magsaysay, Naguilan
Minimum Bid Price P 2,011,950.00

Lot 54 – Res'l. Lot LA 2,800 sqm
Lot4316-G Brgy. Magsaysay, Naguilan
Minimum Bid Price P 1,190,000.00

Lot 55 - Res'l. Lot LA 272 sqm
Lot3402 Libertad St. QuezonDist.Naguilan
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Lot 56 - Res'l. Lot LA 257 sqm
Lot3476 Libertad St, Quezon Dist, Naguilan
Minimum Bid Price P 192,750.00

Lot 57 - Res'l. Lots LA 2,662
L4259-A&C Maharlika Highway, Magsaysay, Naguilan
Minimum Bid Price P 1,969,880.00

Lot 58 – Orchard w/ Poultry Houses LA 106,841sqm, FA 955sqm
Lot10516-B-2 & Lot4447-E Brgy. Magsaysay, Naguilan
Minimum Bid Price P 6,485,500.00

Lot 59 - Comm'l Lots w/ Imprvmnt LA7 415sqm, FA187sqm Lot2-C-B-283 Maharlika Highway, Alibagu, Ilagan
Minimum Bid Price P 5,951,887.00

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Lot 60 – Res'l. Lot LA 3,871 sqm
Brgy Alibagu, Ilagan (in front of Prov Capitol)
Minimum Bid Price P 6,580,700.00

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Lot 61– Res'l. Lot w/ Imprvmnt LA 197 sqm, FA 150 sqm
Brgy. Madayegdeg, San Fernando
Minimum Bid Price P 771,194.00

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Lot 62 – Res'l. Lots LA 500 sqm
L14&15 Blk8 Narra St. Carmay Subd, Carmay East, Rosales
Minimum Bid Price P 425,000.00

Lot 63 – Res'l. Twnhse LA 251 sqm, FA 300sqm
16241-E Brgy. Rd, Nalsian, Calasiao
Minimum Bid Price P 2,267,421.00

Lot 64 - Res'l. Lot LA 2,071 sqm
#4 Mamaradlo St, Poblacion West, Calasiao
Minimum Bid Price P 4,659,750.00

Lot 65 - Res'l. Lot LA 228 sqm
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Lot 66 - Res'l. Lot LA 219 sqm
Lot688-K Callejon St, Pogo Chico, Dagupan City
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Lot 67 - Res'l. Lot LA 392 sqm
M.H. del Pilar St. Mayombo Dist, Dagupan City
Minimum Bid Price P 1,332,800.00

Lot 68 - Res'l. Lot LA 194 sqm
L1 Nat-Ars Subd.Tapuac Dist. Dagupan City
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Lot 69 - Res'l. Lot LA 315 sqm
L7 Blk111 Morry Land Subd, Navaluan, Mangaldan
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Minimum Bid Price P 1,076,900.00
Lot 72 – L73 Blk9; LA 54 sqm, FA 92sqm
Minimum Bid Price P 1,107,000.00

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Res'l. Condo., Makati South Hills Arcade, East Service Rd. Brgy.Batalgag (near airport)
Lot 73 – Unit 302 FA 107.35 sqm
Minimum Bid Price P 1,624,950.00
Lot 74 – Unit 301 FA 136.31 sqm
Minimum Bid Price P 2,317,270.00
Lot 75 – Unit 307 FA 136.31 sqm
Minimum Bid Price P 2,317,270.00

QUEZON CITY

Lot 76 – Res'l. Twnhse FA 230.61 sqm
Unit13 Capitol Golf Townhomes & Golfers Villas, Capitol Hills (near Ateneo/UP)
Minimum Bid Price P 3,874,248.00

Lot 77 – Res'L. Lot w/ Imprvmnt LA 230 30sqm, FA 139sqm
#16 Lot17 Pajo St, Quirino 2-A/Quirino Dist., Proj. 2
Minimum Bid Price P 2,074,170.00

Lot 78 – Res'L. Lot w/ Imprvmnt LA 230 40sqm, FA 86sqm
#16 Lot19 Pajo St, Quirino 2-A/Quirino Dist., Proj. 2
Minimum Bid Price P 2,074,170.00

SHOW MONEY P25,000.00 CASH OR MC PER PROPERTY

CPMI Exclusive Auction Manager *"Text us & we'll call you."*
Mike: (0918)6169574, Malu: (0918)2136670,
Muffet: (0915)4125196

HOTLINE NUMBERS:
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GUARANTEED FINANCING!!!
10% DP for Vacant Lots
20% DP for Property w/Improvements (split 10 - 10)
10 Years to Pay @ 12% int. p.a. Fixed

ALL PROPERTIES ARE ON AN "AS IS WHERE IS BASIS" PROPERTIES AND PRICES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE THE BANK RESERVES THE RIGHT TO WITHDRAW ANY PROPERTY BEFORE THE AUCTION PLEASE CONFIRM ATTENDANCE TO ENSURE SEATS AND PARKING.

CONDO/TWNHSE

MANDALUYONG

CONDO, BNEW, 09192189817

Rush Bnew Penthse
Overlooking Wack2x Golf
#8 Wackwack Condo
4BR w/TB 2veranda fully furn 310m² 3parking slots
•NEGOTIABLE•
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PASIG

Alexandra 3br 3tb 0917-5213838

Luxurious Great Loc. Ortigas Ctr 941-5041/0927-3925928

Malayan Plaza Nr Podium terms 1-2br 634-1212

SAN JUAN

RUSH SALE
CONDO UNIT
P2.4M w/ 2 Bedrooms, Toilet & Bath at Quadrillon Mansion, M. Paterno St. & N. Domingo, San Juan. Call Reynold CP# 09174327579

QUEZON CITY

5Yr to 2 Eastwood City 634-1212

Sct Tuazon condo 2M 4141709

CONDO/TWNHSE

QUEZON CITY

EASTWOOD 3BR3TB 4.2M
AVAILABLE IMMEDIATELY
Panoramic View Pool 77m²
09184845443

Eastwood City Resd'l 5 Yr to Pay 0917-5213838

HIGHEST CONDO in QC 1&2br Penthse2.5-7M 09189235216

LOT

Brgy. Kaybagal Tagaytay 2,500sq.m. Covered 4 Titles Call 7225614/15

JUNCTION ANTIPOLO Rd - Theresa Rd and Rd to Solid Cement. Call 7225614 9,725 sq.m.

PROVINCIAL

★100% TAGAYTAY ★
240m²-up 3,550m² 134T DP 6 Mos to pay 6T Mo. nr Taal Vista 6609372

MARIKINA

Tangerine St 1578m² 0917-5213838

LOT

QUEZON CITY

RESIDENTIAL nr UP Ateneo 204m² to 816m² P8,500/m² 09189235216

RUSH! QC LOTS
•LA VISTA SUBD LA 1,275m²
•EXCLUSIVE PINNACLE Ayala Hillside LA1,213m² Overlooking Capitol Golf Lot Area 1,213m²
•NEGOTIABLE•
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Heritage Park 0917-5213838

LOY-MK FLY EST.@2.5M 8386645

LOY-PQ/MKN 8 SLOTS 09164634182

REAL ESTATE FOR RENT

CONDO/TWNHSE

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ORIENTAL GARDENS
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Bare w AC / Elegantly Furnished
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MAKATI

2BR Apt. New 895-1662

QUEZON CITY

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WAREHOUSE/ FACTORY

Cubao fabshp P25T 725-7342

Cubao wkshop P25T 8974697

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QC Whse 350/600/420m² 24hr secured wall 4563243

ROOM & BOARD

El Grande Inn, Paranaque 8257524 daily weekly 24hr

•FURNISH PASAY 8872865•

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BEDSPACE

Resdn'l/Furnish 2PerRm Male Single Bed T897-3770

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GALAS QC Front of Market T - 410-1406 / 0927-2859567

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BUSINESS . DOCTOR 524-3197

WANTED

ASSISTANT SALES MANAGER
for the Tourism Industry
- Female, at least 35 years old
- Must have at least 5 years exp. in managing Account Executives
- Proficient in oral & written English

ACCOUNT EXECUTIVE
- Female, with pleasing personality
- Must have excellent public relations skills.
- At least 2 years sales experience in the tourism industry
- Proficient in oral & written English

Compensation commensurate to qualifications.

Come personally to submit your complete resume, transcript of records, and 2x2 photo, Mondays or Fridays 1:00 - 5:00 p.m.; Saturdays 8:00 - 12nn to:

Mr. Sunny F. David
Penthouse, Oppen Bldg.,
349 G. Puyat st., Makati City

REAL ESTATE FOR SALE OR RENT

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APT 4 SALE/RENT 4500-7000 Bedspace 1500 M/F Call AJ 5610980 / 09167144320 • 09204136412

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'97Sportage Cola Blue 4WD Bnew Pirelli Tire 230T neg 0927-8917739

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2001 Strada, fully loaded, TV, 12cd changer, camper shell w /AC and Japanese Seat, bull bar, ladder, registered /comprehensive insurance. 725T Call 0920-9003033 •09189422422

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CAR VANS 929-2811 414-2877

CarsVans CoasterBus 422-9296

CARS/VANS/BRIDAL 8969956

Cheap Van Rental 9330311

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P800/L3 9136710 / 4333682

RENT A VAN 0917-5444721 / 6424405

REVO w/driver 9272821

ROLFE MULTILINES RENT A VAN w/ aromatheraphy 751-0491•0917-8536992

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1.5% Car Loan 5344441

1.5% CARLOAN 373-6519

1.5% CARLOAN 788-0361

1.5% Easy Car Loan 4112547/48

1.5% Easy Carloan 7815352/55

1.5% Fast Car Loan 6560140

1.5% w/oTaking Car 7228942-43

1.5% w/oTaking Car 3650974/75

•1HR Fast Car Loan 7125202•

2% w/o Taking Car 7262780

2% w/o taking car 7880183-84

2% w/oTaking Car 8966630/33

2% w/oTaking Car 8959454

2% w/oTaking Car 8870490/95

2% w/out taking car 5315577

2% w/out taking car 6567685

GENERAL ITEMS FOR SALE

AUDIO/ VIDEO

Canon EOS5Quarts Digital Lens28-105mm 75-300mm Speedlite Flash 430EZ P60• 0917-6222941 • Hse 426-457•

BILLIARDS

26T New Compt Sr Imptd 776750

BUY/SELL

PRUDENTIAL PLANS 7137284

STORAGE TANKS for LEASE

Capacities: Two (2) tanks at 5,233 cu.m. each; One (1) tank at 3,363 cu.m.
Location: Pinamucan, Batangas City
Port Faculty: Can receive 40,000 DWT Ocean tankers max. 215 mtrs length and 12 mtrs draft

Ideal for Storage of Petroleum-Based Products & Solvents
Can be commissioned in three (3) months time

For Inquiry:
Mr. Apolinario I. Carandang, Tel. No. (043) 727-4107
Mr. Jose C. Fernandez, Jr., Tel. No. (02) 818-9861

LMG Chemicals Corp.

GENERAL ITEMS FOR SALE

PETS

DOG TRAINER 0919-3419012

Shihtzu M Adult Chmpine Call/Txt • 0917-7901017

The offices of the PCCI will be closed from Thursday (March 31) to Saturday (April 2) in connection with the Annual Outing of the Directors & Staff

WANTED TO BUY

A NAME YOU CAN TRUST! MANILA WATCH EXCHANGE
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PUBLIC NOTICES

LEGAL NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that the estate of the late Benedicto G. Miran, Sr. was extrajudicially settled by the heirs on March 8, 2005 as per Doc. No. 446, Page No. 91, Book 1 Series of 2005 before Notary Public Atty. Nenita A. Dantes of Quezon City.
PDI-Mach 31,April7&14, 2005

INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITIES

BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES

L88EDC has TRANSFORMED & CHANGED the lives of many professionals into GLOBAL ENTREPRENEURS. www.L88edc.com

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RTW Consign 09167940002

NEED SIDELINE? EXTRA CASH P/F P20K/mo. #3762642

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

MALE/FEMALE

ARCHL DESIGNER/DRAFTMAN GR8 IN ACAD 5YR EXP 2426178

BSP•BSN•PT•MT
Any Allied Health Grads up to P45T/ Mol 8927828

CAREGIVERS 3026893

Follow the leader.

Our client is an international non-profit, non-political and non-sectarian child development agency that operates in over 30 countries. It has provided development assistance in the Philippines for 35 years and in partnership with 49 community-based organizations, assists more than 216,000 children and their families. It is currently seeking a high-caliber development professional to lead its office in the in the Philippines as the

NATIONAL DIRECTOR

Reporting to the Regional Representative, he/she will provide the vision and strategic leadership in the country, articulating the agency's vision and mission as well as designing and implementing a strategic plan to address the causes and effects of poverty and other adverse conditions on children in the country.

Responsibilities will include:

- **Advocacy** – Represent and influence policies for children to all relevant stakeholders including government, donors, NGO partners and other interested parties to ensure that the agency is recognized as the leading child development organization;
- **Leadership** – Provide leadership for the agency's national program through strategic planning, alliances, learning, research and documentation aligned with regional and organizational strategies;
- **Management** – With full operational responsibility, ensure adequate financial, human and physical resource allocation and management and maintain quality operational standards and compliance to the organization's policies and guidelines as well as to local laws and regulations;
- **Resource Mobilization and Management** – Acquisition of additional resources and funding both in-country and internationally, ensuring their proper utilization in pursuit of quality programs;
- **Program Management** – Expand and develop programs through initiatives that advance the agency's impact on the wellbeing of children and their communities;

The successful candidate must have the following qualifications:

- At least 5 years experience gained from an international NGO at the management level
- Proven ability to grow a development agency by attracting local and international resources and building alliances
- Demonstrated high level of interpersonal and cross-cultural skills including the ability to build collaborative relationships internally and externally with sensitivity to cultural, ethnic, social and political issues
- Strong leadership skills in fostering teamwork., developing and motivating staff
- Forward thinking, strong visioning, strategic planning and implementation ability, effective under pressure, results oriented and proactive with the ability to multi-task
- Demonstrated technical expertise in such areas as project, budget and resource management.
- Outstanding written and oral communication skills and proven ability in the English language. Tagalog desirable.
- A good grasp of children's issues at national and global levels a distinct advantage

Our client is prepared to offer competitive salary and benefits package to the right candidate. Send your resume through e-mail or to the address below before April 15, 2005. As this requirement is urgent, please include references as well as their contact details.

John Clements Consultants, Inc.
EXECUTIVE SEARCH & SELECTION DIVISION
9th Floor Antel 2000 Corporate Center, 121 Valero St., Salcedo Village, Makati City
Tel.:(632) 845-2002 to 04 Fax: 845-2106 E-mail:
lily.quintans@johnclements.com
Visit our website at www.jch.nclements.com

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Peoplesoft E-Recruitment Systems
Peoplesoft Specialists – Payroll Interface
Peoplesoft –Security Department
Windows / UNIX / Network Administrators
Mobile Site Masters
Mainframe/ CARDPAC Consultants
Mainframe/ Systematic Business Analysts

Key Dynamics Consulting Pte.
May be assigned in the US, Australia, Japan, Taiwan or China
*** Fluent in reading and writing Japanese; has excellent English communication skills**
Network Administrator *
w/ Microsoft Windows or Network Administration cert (CCNA, etc.) or w/ Unix Administration skills
Infrastructure Development & Maintenance Support Personnel *
w/ experience in providing operator support in a help desk environment
Consultants/Implementors (Oracle)
- w/ experience in Oracle Financial, Supply Chain Management and Customer Relationship Management, applications (Oracle-PeopleSoft)

IRELAND

Nurses, work in IRELAND while waiting for your pending US applications!
Dublin General Hospital needs:
120 Nurses urgently needed with:
- **Minimum of 3 years recent experience in: Pediatric, Neonatal ICU or General Nursing**
- **must have EITHER: an IELTS overall of 6.5; Speaking score of 6.0 or TOEFL score of 207**

50 Medical Doctors with experience in:
Medical/Surgical, General/ Family practice, Internal Medicine, Neurology, Psychiatry & OB

MIDDLE EAST

Dubai General Contractors, Dubai needs
All applicants must have at least 5 yrs. experience in HIGH RISE building construction

MEP Engineers/Coordinators
Mechanical Engineers
Electrical Engineers
Land Surveyors (w/ Total Station Experience)
Quantity Surveyors (Electrical/Mechanical)
Male Secretaries
QA/QC Engineers
Project Engineers
Planning Engineers (Civil/Structural/Electrical)
Draftsmen (Architectural/Structural)

Al Fardan Group, Qatar needs:
Personal Accountant for the President
General Accountant
Male /female; 25-30 yrs old;auditing background
Male Nurse – 24 to 30 yrs old; 3 yrs co. nurse
Technical Engineer /Maintenance Engineer

GAC, KSA needs:
Civil/Electrical Engineers
Surveyors
General Foremen
Heavy Truck-Mixer/ Concrete Pump Operator
Mechanics

Go to www.principalia.com
for more details, job listings & online applications

or apply personally with the following documents filed in a long white folder: resume with a detailed description of your working experience, 3 pcs 2x2 picture & photocopy of passport, certificates/license; encoded resume in 3½ floppy diskette in Word format.

PRINCIPALIA, INC.
4th Flr MG Bldg. 150 Amorsolo St. Legaspi Village, Makati City
Tel. No. 8151070/ 20 extn. 101 Email : hrd@principalia.com
POEA-596-LB-061004-R Beware of Illegal Recruiters For Manpower Pooling only No Fees to be collected.

NATIONAL FOOD AUTHORITY
REGION VI, ILOILO CITY

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID
FOR GRAINS HANDLING SERVICES FOR NFA REGION VI

The National Food Authority (NFA), Region VI, Iloilo City invites qualified handling services contractors to apply for eligibility and to bid for the provision of grain handling services in the different warehouses in Region VI for calendar year 2005.

LOT NO.	PROVINCE	ESTIMATED VOLUME TO BE HANDLED (In bag of 50 kgs)	APPROVED BUDGET FOR THE CONTRACT (ABC)
1	Aklan	102,000	P 404,250.00
2	Antique	117,000	P 486,500.00
3	Capiz	243,000	P 1,186,500.00
4	Iloilo & Guimaras	511,000	P 2,542,750.00
5	Negros Occidental	503,000	P 1,765,750.00

The schedule of bidding activities is as follows:

Activity	Date	Time
1. Issuance of eligibility requirements and bid forms	April 1-22, 2005	8 AM-5 PM
2. Pre-bid conference	April 29, 2005	9:30 AM
3. Submission and opening of eligibility requirements and bid documents	May 10, 2005	10:00 AM

Interested parties may secure the application forms, eligibility requirements and bid forms from the RBAC Secretariat at NFA Regional Office after payment of a non-refundable / non-transferable fee of One Thousand Pesos (P1,000.00) per lot.

For inquiry, please call RBAC Secretariat through telephone number (033) 329-2165 and telefax number (033) 329-6383.

THE NFA RESERVES THE RIGHT TO ACCEPT OR REJECT ANY OR ALL BIDS, TO WAIVE ANY FORMALITY, TECHNICALITY OR DEFECT FOUND THEREIN AND ACCEPT SUCH BIDS OR AWARD TO ANY CONTRACTOR WHOSE BID IS DEEMED MOST ADVANTAGEOUS TO THE NFA OR THE GOVERNMENT.

(Sgd.) **VILMA H. ZARRAGA, MNSA**
RBAC CHAIRMAN
Asst. Regional Director

(PDI–March 31 & April 7, 2005)

NOTICE OF LOSS
Notice is hereby given that the pair of Plate No. DEP-755 registered in the name of JOSE R. LEGASPI, was lost per Affidavit of Loss dated Feb. 8, 2005 under the Notarial Registry of Atty. Benjamin B. Tabaque as Doc. 375; Page 76, Book 289; Series of 2005
(PDI – March 17, 24 & 31, 2005)

Restaurant, male entertainment Bar
Opens at 8pm to 4am
Cover Boy *Bar* and Restaurant
Ramon Magsaysay Boulevard Sta. Mesa, Manila
Second Floor, 3160 Alcar Building D. Ampil Street (besides NSO Census)
• 0927-585-6309

KSEARCH
ASIA CONSULTING, INC.

Challenging Roles in Fast-Growing Organization

Our client – a multinational company with regional / global operation, focused on being client-centered and promoting self-motivation, commitment, and teamwork, is in need of:

Korean-speaking Process Specialists
Japanese-speaking Process Specialists
Thai-speaking Process Specialists

The position/s participates in the management of documents and liaison with user groups in different countries.

The ideal candidates will have the ability to work with people with diverse cultural backgrounds and possess the following skills:

1. Computer proficiency
2. Customer oriented English communication skills
3. Customer relationship skills
4. Knowledge with MS Office suite
5. Aptitude for statistical analysis

Challenging career opportunities and attractive compensation package await the successful candidates. Interested qualified applicants may send their resumes to KSearch Asia Consulting, Inc. c/o Dein Lopez at the 22nd Floor, 139 Corporate Centre Building, 139 Valero Street, Salcedo Village, Makati City; or email to dlopez@ksearchasia.com ; fax at 893-6259.

Applications received before April 15, 2005 will have an advantage.

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Step-by-Step, develop skills needed to create and illustrate designs for a variety of jewelry in full color and fine detail

NO artistic training or experience required

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Lenox Hotel

A young and fast-growing hotel in Dagupan City is looking for qualified applicants to fill the position of:

HEAD CHEF

- 30 to 45 years old, college graduate
- willing to be based in Dagupan City
- with at least five years experience in a hotel as a Sous Chef or Chef D'Partie
- Specializes in Western & European Cuisine
- knowledgeable in menu costing & menu planning for both restaurant outlets & banquets
- Should be of good moral character
- has a positive disposition and a desire to share his skills & knowledge
- Should have leadership qualities

For interested applicants, please send your resumé with 2x2 picture to Lenox Hotel,, Rizal St., Dagupan City, email at lenoxhotel@pldtdsl.net or call 0755157093 to 96, 0917-5080748 on or before April 7, 2005. Ask for Ms. Ma-Ann.

A JAPANESE FIRM URGENTLY NEEDS

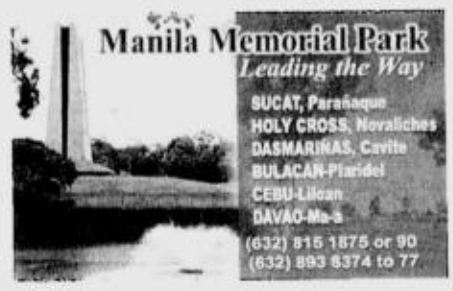
- Male / Female, age 25-35 years old;
- With pleasing personality, smart, and possess good communication skills;
- Can speak and write Japanese Language;
- Preferably college graduate and computer literate;
- Preferably with related workmanship on marketing, business development, customer service, and handling of International accounts.

If you meet the above criteria, please send your resumé via Email: marizhruprs@yahoo.com not later than April 5, 2005.

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

THURSDAY, MARCH 31, 2005

OBITUARIES



Eduardo Larcina Malabanan

God saw you getting tired so He put His arms around you and whispered, "Come with Me." With tearful eyes we watched you suffer and saw you fade away. Although we loved you dearly, we could not make you stay.

A golden heart stopped beating, working hands were put to rest. God broke our hearts to prove to us, He only takes the best.

Born July 7, 1935, passed away peacefully on Saturday, March 12, 2005 in the home he shared with his beloved wife, **Sungsook Malabanan**. His children **Eduardo Jr.** and **Shirly**, along with grandsons **Brian** and **Kris**, were there to share the last few weeks of his life.

He leaves behind **Benny**, his brother and constant companion, as well as his sister, **Glory** and former congressman **Pablo Ocampo**. His memory as the **"Uncle Eddie"** will live on in his many nieces and nephews, named as follows:

Anne Marie, Sandy, Jeffrey, Yvette, Laurraine, Grace, Ricky, Mary Ann, Cynthia, Angelica.

Family and friends are invited to attend a liturgy to celebrate his life on Sunday, April 3, 2005 at 2:00 p.m. at G/F, Ritz Towers, 6745 Ayala Avenue, Makati City.

The Officers and Staff

Of

Mantrade Development Corporation

AND

Nissan Manila Inc.

bid farewell to a Friend

VIRGILIO "VIR" L. DIWA

Vice-President

Nissan Motor Phils., Inc.

who passed away on March 30, 2005.

"My Shepherd is the Lord...
Nothing Indeed Shall I want."

"And we know that in all things God works for those who love Him, who have been called according to His purpose." **Romans 8:28**

Our Dearly Beloved

EVALINA APOSTOL HABULAN

Loving wife, mother, and grandmother

Peacefully joined our Lord
on March 29, 2005 at the age of 81.

Her husband **ANTONIO Sr.**; her children and their spouses **MANUEL** and **NENITA**, **ANACLETO** and **LENY**, **DOMINGO** and **EVA**, **CECILIA** and **NOE**, **IMELDA** and **GREGORIO**, **ANTONIO Jr.** and **HELENA**, **ISABELO** and **PAT**; her grandchildren and great-grandson; other relatives and friends request you to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her remains lie in state at the HOLY TRINITY CHAPEL, Loyola Memorial Park, A. Bonifacio Ave., Tañong, Marikina City.

Interment will follow immediately after the Holy Mass at 8:00 a.m., Sunday, APRIL 3, 2005.

Forester MARTIN R. REYES

(Father of Selective Logging)

of Pinili (Badoc), Ilocos Norte and resided in Quezon City
and a former Assistant Director of the Forest Research Institute (FORI),
joined his Creator in his Grace on March 26, 2005 at the age of 90.

An environmentalist and a humanist who devoted his life to the preservation of the Philippine forest.

His bereaved family: wife **Consejo Lastimosa**; daughters **Eden** and **Janet**; sons **Renin, Igmidio, Alejandro, Carlos, Jorge**, and **Felipe**; son-in-law **Terence James Bentley** : daughters-in-law **Juanita, Azucena (†), Marlyne, Cecilia, Ma. Luisa, Lenida** and **Juliana**; grandchildren **Danilo Sebastian Reyes, Jazmine Faherty, Nenet Rodriguez, Felipe Giovanni Reyes, Jennifer Reyes, Ma. Cielini Reyes, Sherwin Reyes, James Albert Reyes, Josef Jorge Reyes, Dillenia Cecilia Reyes, Gerard Reyes, Joelmar Reyes, Ma. Fatima Reyes, Ephreim Maurice Reyes, Terence Martin Reyes, Mark Monico Reyes**, and **Nathan Paul Reyes**; great grandchildren **Nora Daisy Faherty, Owen Martin Faherty, Monica Reyes, Miggy Reyes, Miko Reyes, Gendrix Rodriguez**, and **Jerrica Aiko Rodriguez**; and other relatives and friends request your prayers for the repose of his soul.

His body lies in state at the Sto. Domingo Church until 12 noon of April 1, 2005,
then at the Forest Management Bureau from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m., and at the
Good Samaritan Church, Quezon Avenue, Quezon City
from 3 p.m. until the morning of April 2, 2005.

Cremation will be on April 2, 2005 after an 8 a.m. church service.

ALBERTO "ETONG" MENDOZA NARVAEZ

of Carsadang Bago, Imus, Cavite

Peacefully joined our Lord on March 26, 2005 at the age of 85

His wife Maximina "Imang"; children Luisito "Boy", Merlita "Mer", Myrna "Mimi" and Marietta "Mayette", in laws, grandchildren, great grandchildren, nephews, niece and relatives request the readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at his residence.
Interment will be on April 3, 2005 at 1:30 p.m.
at Angeles Eternal Garden

"Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God, trust also in Me. In My Father's house are many rooms... I am going there to prepare a place for you."
John 14:1-2

Our Dearly Beloved

Virginia de Vera Clemente

"Nene"

Born September 23, 1929

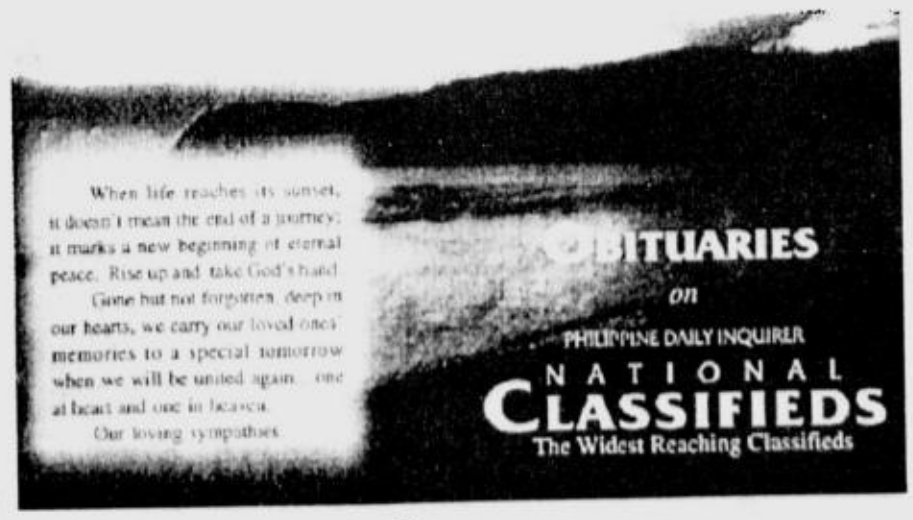
Passed away on March 24, 2005 at West Covina, California, U.S.A.

Her sisters and brother **Dolores (†)** *and* **Antonio Mendoza (†)**, **Teresa** *and* **Glicerio Valles (†)**, **Beatriz** *and* **Benjamin Reyes (†)**, **Rosita (†)** *and* **Sergio Brillantes**, **Bernardita (†)** *and* **Felix Gonzalez**, **Tomas** *and* **Mercedes Clemente**, **Rosario** *and* **Teodoro Capino**, *nephews, nieces, grandchildren and great-grandchildren, and other relatives request the pious reader to pray for the repose of her soul.*

Her cremated remains will arrive in Manila on Sunday morning, April 3, 2005. Her funeral mass will be at 1:00 p.m. April 3, 2005, at the Repository of the Apostle, 2/F St. Peter Parish, Commonwealth Avenue, Quezon City. Interment will follow immediately.

I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith
(2 Timothy 4)

"Eternal life will swallow up that which can die. God made us for this very reason and He has given us the Spirit as a guarantee that we will live again."
2 Cor. 5:4-5



In Loving Memory

CARMEN BORROMEO CRISOL

08 October 1925 – 31 March 2004

To commemorate the first year anniversary of her return to our Creator, the following Masses are offered:

Our Lady of Pentecost & Parish Church	6 AM
Sta. Maria della Strada Parish	6 AM
Parish Church of the Holy Sacrifice	6 AM
St. Joseph Parish Church	6 AM
St. Paul of the Cross Formation Center	6:30 AM

In Loving Memory Of

Antonina "Nani" Bartolabac -Villanueva

(1999 Gintong Ina Awardee)

who peacefully joined her Creator and her husband, **CATALINO, SR.** *on March 28, 2005 at the age of 91.*

Her children: **Catalino, Jr. "Romy"** & **Lolit, Oscar** & **Queenie, Titus, Sr.** & **Tessie, Daisy** & **Mon, Florante** & **Yvonne, Douglas** & **Joy, Mark** & **Alma, Marilou** & **Pons, Albert (†)** & **Genamae** and **Rainier** & **Vicky;** and grandchildren, great grandchildren, sisters, brother, relatives and friends request prayers for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her body lies in state at the St. Ignatius Cathedral Mortuary, Camp Aguinaldo Quezon City. Interment is on Saturday, April 2, 2005 at the Holy Cross Memorial Park at San Bartolome, Quirino H'way, Q.C. after the 8 a.m. Mass.

ENGR. WILLIAM DENNIS FAGELA TOBIAS

1971 – 2005

Our dearly beloved Engr. **William Dennis Fagela Tobias** peacefully joined our Creator on March 26, 2005 at the age of 34. His loving father (deceased) Atty. **Justino J. Tobias** and his loving mother **Salve F. Tobias,** sisters **Ma. Catherine "Riza"** and **Suzette** and brothers **Geoffrey** and **Angelito "Lito,"** nephews, nieces, relatives and friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

The remains lie in state at La Funeraria Paz, Quezon City. Interment is on April 2, 2005 at the Loyola Memorial Park, Marikina City after the 8:00 A.M. Mass.

For the needs of your departed Loved Ones, the following establishments can help you.

METRO MANILA

•LAS PIÑAS

FUNERARIA FILIPINAS
157 Real St., Zapote Alabang, Las Piñas;
Tels. 873-0507; 873-0024

•MAKATI

DON BOSCO CHAPELS
Pasay Road, Makati City; Tel 894-5932 to 34

FUNERARIA FILIPINAS
865 J.P. Rizal St., Poblacion, Makati City;
Tels 890-3556, 899-8191

LOYOLA MEMORIAL CHAPELS
EDSA cor. Bernardino St., Guadalupe, Makati City;
Tels. 895-1011 to 19

MALABED FUNERAL SERVICE
3-A Coronado St., Guadalupe Viejo, Makati City;
Tel 890-63-18

SANTUARIO DE SAN ANTONIO PARISH
Forbes Park, Makati City. Tel. Nos. 843-8838/30;
Fax No. 843-9223

ST. ALPHONSUS MARY DE LIGOURI PARISH
Magallanes Village, Makati City; Tels. 852-6228, 852-7284

•MALABON

FLORESCO FUNERAL HOME
219 Gen. Luna St., Concepcion, Malabon, Metro Manila;
Tels. 2812953; 2813034; 2810522

•MANDALUYONG

SANTUARIO DE SAN JOSE PARISH
East Greenhills, Mandaluyong City;
Telefax 724-4133; 725-2044

•MANILA

DULCE MEMORIAL SERVICES
Jose Abad Santos Ave. cor. Dinalupihan St.,
Manuguit, Manila
Tels. 712-5102; 741-5125, 741-5133; Fax No. 711-3064

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1501 C.M. Recto Ave. cor. T. Mapua, Manila;
Tels. 711-6931 to 35; 732-4795, 732-2627

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2141 Rizal Ave., Sta. Cruz, Manila; Tel. Nos. 254-0867, 254-0839

ST. MARK MEMORIAL CHAPEL
16-15 G. Tuazon cor. Loreto St., Sampaloc, Manila;
Tels. 749-3579, 781-1772

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2028 Rizal Ave., Sta. Cruz, Manila;
Tels. 493-4458, 493-4540

WELINGTON FUNERAL SERVICES
1511 Gen. Luna St., Paco, Manila;
Tel. 302-5447

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ERIC SANTIAGO MEMORIAL CHAPELS
26 Bayanbayan Ave., Concepcion I, Marikina City; Tels. 942-6044, 475-1177

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9 V. Gomez & 13 V. Gomez St., San Roque, Marikina City;
Tels. 646-1725 or 646-1730

LOYOLA MEMORIAL PARK CHAPELS & CREMATORY SERVICES
Loyola Memorial Park, A. Bonifacio Avenue, Tañong, Marikina City
Tels. 941-3195 to 98; 941-3576; Telefax 941-3577

PAKET SANTIAGO MEMORIAL HOMES
13 V. Gomez St., San Roque, Marikina City; Tels. 646-1725, 646-1730

•PARAÑAQUE

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Dr. A. Santos Ave., Sucat Rd., Sucat, Parañaque City;
Tels. 825-1296, 825-1291, Telefax 825-1314

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Dr. A. Santos Ave., Sucat, Parañaque; Tels. 820-1592; 825-9947; 825-8835

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Phase I, BF Commercial Center,
Parañaque, Metro Manila

RIZAL FUNERAL HOMES
6187 Dr. A. Santos Ave., Sucat, Parañaque City
Tels. 826-1376; 826-9662; (0915) 712-1220

•PASAY

RIZAL FUNERAL HOMES
438 Camentina St., Pasay City; Tels 831-1204

VERONICA MEMORIAL HOMES
Official NBI Morgue 517-A Arnaiz St., Pasay City;
Tels. 831-3797, 844-7845; 843-1801; 845-4836

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San Miguel Ave., Pasig City
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Tels. 641-7909; 641-1735

•QUEZON CITY

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Tels 715-1025; 715-1031; 715-1027

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Tels. 749-3806 to 11; 712-3001; 743-6502 or 05

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Tels. 372-5084; 410-9288/87

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Calsadang Bago, Pateros, Metro Manila;
Tels. 642-6181 to 82

HERITAGE PARK
Bayani Road, Fort Bonifacio, Taguig, Metro Manila
Tels. (DL) 845-2341 to 42;
(TL) 845-2334 to 38 loc. 110/112

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Mandalagan, Bacolod City; Tel. 433-7132

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G. Tirona St., Imus, Cavite;
Tels. (046) 471-3385; (046) 471-4417; (046) 571-1978

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COSMOPOLITAN FUNERAL HOMES, INC.
Nivel Hills, Lahug, Cebu City; Tels 231-0721; 231-3192

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Cebu Branch: A.S. Fortuna Street, Banilad,
Mandaue City, Cebu;
Tels. 346-2543; 346-2601

CLASSIFIEDS

Republic of the Philippines
Department of Transportation and Communications
MARITIME INDUSTRY AUTHORITY
Cebu Maritime Regional Office No. VII
Ground Floor CCCI Center, cor. 11th & 13th Avenues,
North Reclamation Area, Cebu City

Case No. CMRO 05-015

RE: Application for Amendment of Certificate of Public Convenience (CPC) for Permanent Deletion of a Route/Port/Link pursuant to Republic Act No. 9295 and its Implementing Rules and Regulations.

OCEAN FAST FERRIES, INC.,
Applicant.
x----------x

ORDER

This refers to the Application for amendment of Public Convenience (CPC) on the permanent deletion of route/port/link in particular the Tagbilaran – Dumaguete – Tagbilaran port/lin with the following proposed amended sailing schedule.

Cebu	Daily	8:00 AM	Tagbilaran	Daily	7:40 AM
Tagbilaran	Daily	8:10 AM	Larena	Daily	9:40 AM
Larena	Daily	10:10 AM	Plaridel	Daily	12:30 PM
Plaridel	Daily	1:20 PM	Larena	Daily	3:40 PM
Larena	Daily	4:00 PM	Tagbilaran	Daily	5:30 PM
Tagbilaran	Daily	5:50 PM	Cebu	Daily	7:30 PM
Larena	Daily	5:50 AM	Tagbilaran	Daily	7:20 AM
Tagbilaran	Daily	7:30 AM	Cebu	Daily	9:20 AM
Cebu	Daily	9:35 AM	Hilongos	Daily	12:00 NN
Hilongos	Daily	12:20 PM	Cebu	Daily	2:40 PM
Cebu	Daily	5:30 PM	Hilongos	Daily	7:40 PM
Hilongos	Daily	6:00 AM	Cebu	Daily	8:20 AM
Cebu	Daily	9:00 AM	Tagbilaran	Daily	10:40 AM
Tagbilaran	Daily	11:10 AM	Cebu	Daily	12:50 PM
Cebu	Daily	1:20 PM	Tagbilaran	Daily	3:00 PM
Tagbilaran	Daily	3:20 PM	Cebu	Daily	5:00 PM
Cebu	Daily	5:30 PM	Tagbilaran	Daily	7:10 PM
Tagbilaran	Daily	7:30 PM	Larena	Daily	9:00 PM

*The schedules prescribed for applicant in Cebu – Tubigon, Bohol and vice versa and Bredco 2, Bacolod City – Iloilo City and vice versa route as per Decision dated 16 March 2005 shall remain the same.

Rates on a per Link Basis	
Links	Rates
Cebu City – Tubigon, Bohol	P 330
Bredco 2, Bacolod City – Iloilo City	P 330
Hilongos, Leyte – Cebu City	P 500
Cebu – Tagbilaran	P 560
Cebu – Larena	P 710
Tagbilaran – Larena	P 570
Cebu – Plandel	P 910
Larena – Plaridel	P 590
Plaridel – Tagbilaran	P 730

The Applicant shall cause the publication of this Order once in any of the five (5) major newspapers of national circulation in the Philippines or in a newspaper of local circulation, as applicable.

The Applicant shall likewise simultaneously cause the posting of this Order in a conspicuous place at the affected ports, ships, Applicant's premises, passenger terminal/s and ticketing offices, as applicable.

The Applicant shall present the jurisdictional, qualification and documentary requirements in a summary proceeding to be conducted on **April 06, 2005 at 2:00 PM** at the Conference Room, Cebu Maritime Regional Office, Ground Floor, CCCI Bldg. cor. 11th & 13th Avenues, North Reclamation Area, Cebu City, which is within seven (7) days from the date of publication/posting.

The Applicant shall be required to make a written Formal Offer of Evidence (FOE), afterwhich, the application is deemed submitted for resolution/decision.

WITNESS, the Honorable Administrator, **VICENTE T. SUAZO, JR.,** this 29th day of March 2005 at Cebu City, Philippines.

(Sgd.) **GLENN G. CABAÑEZ**
Regional Director

(PDI – March 31, 2005)

Republic of the Philippines
Municipal Government of Calauag, Quezon

BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

No. 005-05

The **MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT OF CALAUAG, QUEZON (MGCQ)** invites interested manufacturers/suppliers to apply for eligibility and to bid, if eligible, for the **SUPPLY AND DELIVERY OF 1 UNIT BRAND NEW BACKHOE LOADER.**

The approved budget for this contract is **Php 6,200,000.00.**

All interested parties are invited to attend the Pre-Bid Conference on **Tuesday, April 5, 2005, 2:00 PM** at the **New Session Hall of the Sangguniang Bayan, Rizal St., Municipal Building Annex, Calauag, Quezon.**

The bid documents shall be available at the **Municipal Budget Office, 1/F Municipal Hall, Calauag, Quezon** starting **March 22, 2005** upon payment of non-refundable fee of **Five Thousand Pesos (Php5,000.00).**

The bidders shall drop their duly accomplished eligibility requirements, technical and financial proposals in three separate sealed envelopes in the bid box located at the **Municipal Budget Office, 1/F Municipal Hall, Calauag, Quezon.** Deadline for submission and receipt of bids shall be on **Tuesday, April 26, 2005 at 2:00 PM.**

For more information, please call the BAC Secretariat at telephone no. **(042) 301-8575**

MGCQ reserves the right to waive any formality in the responses to the eligibility requirements and to this invitation, MGCQ further reserves the right to reject any and all proposals, or declare a failure of bidding, or no award the contract, and makes no assurance that a contract shall be entered into as a result of this invitation.

(Sgd.) **EDUARDO N. INTOY**
BAC Secretariat

(PDI–March 22 & 31, 2005)

LAND BANK OF THE PHILIPPINES

Ang Bangkong May Damdaming-Bayan
1598 M. H. del Pilar St. cor. Dr. J. Quintos St., Malate, Manila
Tel. Nos. 522-0000; 526-0100 connecting all departments

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Land Bank of the Philippines invites interested suppliers who are (a) duly licensed Filipino citizens/sole proprietorships; or (b) 60% Filipino owned partnerships/corporations; or (c) two or more suppliers forming into joint ventures jointly and severally liable; or (d) cooperatives duly registered with the CDA; with largest single contract, similar to the items for bid, for the last 2 years, at least equal to 50% of the approved budget; and with Net Financial Contracting Capacity (NFCC) at least equal to the approved budget, to apply for eligibility and to bid for the following items:

ITB No.	Item / Description	Approved Budget	Source of Funds
2005-077	1 lot Two (2) Year Contract for courier and forwarding delivery service agreement for LANDBANK Regional Branches' inward and outward Clearing Checks for the period May 1, 2005 to April 30, 2007	P 2,467,680.00 or P 102,820.00 per month	LBP Funds

Bidding of the above requirements is scheduled on April 27, 2005 at 1:00 p.m. and the Bid Documents may be obtained from the Procurement Division of the General Services Department, 25th Floor, LANDBANK Plaza, M. H. del Pilar corner Dr. Quintos Streets, Malate, Manila, upon payment of a non-refundable fee of P1,000.00.

Interested suppliers are requested to attend the Pre-Bid Conference scheduled on April 14, 2005 at the 25th Floor, Conference Room, LANDBANK Plaza, Malate, Manila.

All particulars relative to the Qualification/Eligibility, Bid Bond, Performance Bond, Pre-bid Conference, Bid Evaluation and Award of Contract shall be governed by the provisions of RA 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulations.

Only those bidders who comply with the Bank's requirements shall be eligible to participate in the bidding.

LANDBANK reserves the right to reject any or all bids, to declare the bidding a failure or waive any defect or informality and to accept bids as may be considered most advantageous to the Bank.

COMMITTEE ON BIDS AND AWARDS

(PDI – March 31 & April 7, 2005)

GENERAL HEADQUARTERS
ARMED FORCES OF THE PHILIPPINES
BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE
Camp General Emilio Aguinaldo, Quezon City

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Armed Forces of the Philippines invites all service providers/suppliers to apply for eligibility and to bid for the following:

1. **Janitorial Services of Armed Forces of the Philippines Medical Center for CY 2005** with an approved Budget of **P4,600,000.00** chargeable against CY 2005 AFPMC Operating Budget.
2. **Laundry Services of Armed Forces of the Philippines Medical Center** for CY 2005 with an approved budget of **P1,250,000.00** chargeable against CY 2005 AFPMC Operating Budget.
3. **Waste Management of Armed Forces of the Philippines Medical Center for CY 2005** with an approved budget of **P600,000.00** chargeable against CY 2005 AFPMC Operating Budget.

Bid documents will be available for issuance starting **March 31, 2005** until **April 29, 2005** during office hours (8:00 AM to 5:00 PM) at the BAC Secretariat Office of the AFP Bids and Awards Committee, G/F Bulwagang Syquia, Camp General Emilio Aguinaldo, Quezon City upon payment of a non-refundable amount of *Four Thousand Six Hundred Pesos (PHP 4,600.00) for the Janitorial Services, One Thousand Two Hundred Fifty Pesos (Php 1,250.00) for the Laundry Services and Six Hundred Pesos (Php 600.00) for the Healthcare Waste Collection Service.* The form of payment will be in cash or cashier's check in favor of AFP.

Representatives are required to present a Special Power of Attorney, issued by the prospective bidder before issuance of the Bid Documents and all other transactions thereto.

A Pre-Bid Conference is scheduled on the following dates:

Nomenclature	*Date / Place*
Janitorial Services of the Armed Forces of the Philippines Medical Center for CY 2005	April 22, 2005 at 9:00 A.M. at the Conference Room, OCG, AFP Medical Center, V Luna Road, Quezon City.
Laundry Services of the Armed Forces of the Philippines Medical Center for CY 2005	April 22, 2005 at 11:00 A.M. at the Conference Room, OCG, AFP Medical Center, V Luna Road, Quezon City
Waste Management of the Armed Forces of the Philippines Medical Center for CY 2005	April 22, 2005 at 1:00 P.M. at the Conference Room, OCG, AFP Medical Center, V Luna Road, Quezon City.

Bidders may inquire in writing to the BAC Secretariat three (3) days prior to the Pre-Bid Conference.

Deadline for submission of applications for eligibility requirements and the bid envelopes are as follows:

Nomenclature	*Date / Place*
Janitorial Services of the Armed Forces of the Philippines Medical Center for CY 2005	May 6, 2005 at 9:00 A.M. at the Conference Room, OCG, AFP Medical Center, V Luna Road, Quezon City.
Laundry Services of the Armed Forces of the Philippines Medical Center for CY 2005	May 10, 2005 at 9:00 A.M. at the Conference Room, OCG, AFP Medical Center, V Luna Road, Quezon City.
Waste Management of the Armed Forces of the Philippines Medical Center for CY 2005	May 13, 2005 at 9:00 A.M. at the Conference Room, OCG, AFP Medical Center, V Luna Road, Quezon City.

The Armed Forces of the Philippines reserves the right to reject any or all bids as specified in RA 9184 without assuming any obligation whatsoever for any expenses or losses that may be incurred by the bidder in the preparation of this bid.

(Sgd.) **JORGE G NECESITO**
Rear Admiral AFP
Chairman

(PDI – March 31 & April 7, 2005)

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JOB Market

Republic of the Philippines
Department of Health
Center for Health Development – NCR
DR. JOSE N. RODRIGUEZ MEMORIAL HOSPITAL
Tala, Caloocan City
Telefax: 962-82-09 / Tel. 962-98-87

March 28, 2005

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Dr. Jose N. Rodriguez Memorial Hospital invites responsible and duly accredited suppliers from DOH/CHD-NCR to apply for eligibility and to bid for the supply of the following items:

A. Foodstuffs	D. One Set Pressure Tank
B. Equipments	E. One Set Centrifugal or Booster Pump
C. Plumbing Materials	F. Wheel Chairs

SCHEDULE OF ACTIVITIES:

Issuance of Bid Documents	: April 11, 2005 (8:00 A.M.–5:00 P.M.)
Pre-Bid Conference	: Item A, B, C, D, E, & F April 11, 2005 (9:00 A.M.)
Submission & Opening of Bids	: Item A : April 21, 2005 (9:00 A.M.) Items B, C, D, E, & F: : April 21, 2005 (1:00 P.M.)

Prospective bidders may secure bid proposal form from the BAC Secretariat, Dr. Jose N. Rodriguez Memorial Hospital, upon payment of a non-refundable fee of Five Hundred Pesos (P500.00).

All activities shall be held at the Training Room, Dr. Jose N. Rodriguez Memorial Hospital, Tala, Caloocan City, unless announced otherwise.

Each bid must be accompanied by a bidder's bond in the form of a certified check, manager's check, or GSIS bond in an amount equivalent to a percentage of the approved budget for the contract to be bid. The Approved Budget Cost is stated on the bid documents.

For further inquiries, interested bidders may contact the BAC Secretary or call telephone no. 962-9884 or 962-9886.

Dr. JNRMH reserves the right to accept or reject any bid and to annul the bidding process and reject all bids at anytime prior to notice of award without thereby incurring any liability to the affected bidders or any obligation to inform the affected bidders of the grounds for the hospital's action.

(Sgd.) **EDGARDO SA. JAVILLONAR, MD, MHA.**
Chief of Sanitarium III

(PDI–March 31 & April 5, 2005)

NOTICE / WARNING

This is to inform the General Public that

VERITAS MARITIME CORPORATION

a duly licensed POEA-manning company with office at 15th Flr., MARC 2000 Tower, 1973 Taft Ave., Malate, Mla., does **not** recruit crew or service personnel for Cruise or Passenger vessels. For this reason **VERITAS** has not authorized anybody to recruit for such vessels.

Seafarers who are seeking employment on board our dry cargo vessels are required to apply in person at the abve address.

MAG-INGAT SA ILLEGAL RECRUITERS!

Seminar on Investigative Research

THE AIM-HILLS Governance Center, in cooperation with the Philippine Center for Investigative Journalism (PCIJ), will conduct a one-and-a-half-day training seminar on Investigative Research on April 19 and 20 at the AIM Conference Center Manila. The seminar will explain how investigations are carried out, and discuss examples of PCIJ investigations and their impact. Participants will learn how to conduct interviews on sensitive issues, retrieve documents, and draw information through computer-assisted data-gathering. How to investigate government purchases is one of the seminar highlights. For details and inquiries, contact Ronette Capiral of the AIM-Hills Governace Center at the 750 1010 loc 2145 or email her at rcapiral@mail.aim.edu.ph.

BUSINESS

CAB allows 3 budget airlines to mount charter flights to Clark

By Clarissa S. Batino

THE CIVIL Aeronautics Board has given three budget Asian carriers the go-ahead to mount charter flights to and from Clark International Airport in Pampanga.

The carriers are Malaysia's Air Asia, and Singapore's Tiger Airways and Thai Air Asia.

The first two are set to start flying to Clark's Diosdado Macapagal International Airport next month. Thai Air Asia, a unit of the Malaysian firm, will also launch flights within the first semester.

CAB executive director Tomas Mañalac said the provisional approval given to these airlines would have to be renewed monthly.

Tiger Asia had proposed to fly to Clark from Singapore three times a week while Air Asia wanted to have daily flights to Clark from Kuala Lumpur and Kota Kinabalu.

Tiger Airways will charge only $16 or less than P900 for a one-way ticket from Clark to Singapore. Air Asia will sell its one-way ticket from Clark to Kuala Lumpur for P1,000.

Jetstar Asia, another low-cost carrier from Singapore, is also set to launch its Manila flights through the Ninoy Aquino International Airport starting April.

Airfares of budget carriers are reportedly lower by up to 60 percent than the regular fares.

At present, only South Korea's Asiana Airlines and Clark-based cargo carrier United Parcel Services use the Diosdado Macapagal airport. Asiana flies five times a week to Clark from Incheon.

Mañalac said Air Asia, Thai Air Asia and Tiger Airways were taking advantage of the government's decision to adopt open skies policy for passengers and cargo in the former American military airbase.

Although the process has yet to be complete, the CAB chief said the liberalized air charter program for Clark airport provided that the three carriers could already mount charter flights to the Central Luzon hub.

"Charter flight approvals are flight specific so if they apply for a one-month authorization, they will have to apply again after a month," explained the CAB chief.

As an incentive, the carriers would enjoy exemption from aeronautical fees at Clark for 6 months.

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Subsidy for public transport sought

By Abigail L. Ho

TO PREVENT further increases in transport fares, the Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry is urging the government to come up with a subsidy scheme for the public transport sector.

PCCI chair emeritus Miguel Varela said transport fares were critical in the sense that if they rose, prices of commodities and services would also increase.

Varela, however, gave no suggestion as to how the government should go about the proposed subsidy scheme, but said the government should focus its attention on doing everything it could to prevent hikes in transport fares despite the escalating costs of fuel.

Members of the public transport sector earlier sought a socialized pricing scheme for petroleum products, with the private sector expected to shoulder the bulk of the additional costs arising from increases in oil prices.

Philippine Confederation of Drivers Organizations-Alliance of Concerned Transport Operators (PCDO-Acto) president Efren de Luna said the oil firms and private motorists should subsidize the oil expenses of the public transport sector to prevent fare hikes.

Apart from maintenance and spare parts, day-to-day oil expenses constitute the bulk of the costs of public transport operators.

The continuing rise in fuel costs leaves public transport operators with very little margins.

Alliance of Transport Operators and Drivers Associations of the Philippines (Altodap) president Boy Vargas added that "jeepney drivers were hardly earning anything because of the rising diesel prices."

This was why Integrated Metro Bus Operators Association (Imboa) president Claire dela Fuente said a socialized pricing scheme for petroleum products should be put in place.

Dela Fuente said private motorists could afford the frequent oil price increases that local oil firms had been implementing these past months. The public transport sector, however, could no longer absorb these price hikes without being allowed to raise their fares correspondingly.

Varela added that a government subsidy for the public transport sector would not only help prevent further increases in transport fares but would also help eliminate the need to hike wages.

PCCI president Donald Dee said it was difficult enough for companies to survive nowadays because of the high operating costs.

A wage hike, he said, would only aggravate the situation and possibly lead to closure of businesses.

PLANTERSBANK'S SME FINANCING EXPERIENCE
Ambassador Jesus P. Tambunting, chair and CEO of Plantersbank, presented his paper "Lending to SMEs as a Business Opportunity: The Plantersbank Experience" to some 300 participants of a dialogue between the Malaysian Central Bank and various financial institutions in that country which was held recently in Kuala Lumpur. With Ambassador Tambuting are Malaysia's Central Bank Governor Tan Sri Dato' Sri Dr. Zeti Akhtar Aziz (middle) and Assistant Governor Dato' Mohd Razif Abdul Kadir (right).

Current account surplus up 49% to $2B in 2004

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE COUNTRY posted a current account surplus of $2 billion in 2004, 49 percent better than a year ago, as stronger inflows from overseas Filipino workers offset the sluggish trade and services earnings during the period.

The 2004 CA surplus was based on a new balance-of-payments computation method adopted by the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas. The new method took into account the recommendations of the International Monetary Fund statistical missions on the classification, treatment and coverage of certain BOP accounts.

Without the adjustments, which dramatically reduced the errors and omissions in the country's BOP, the CA surplus would have been bigger at $5.36 billion.

The CA is a major component of the BOP, which measures the foreign exchange transactions between the economy and the rest of the world. The surplus last year largely came from the 9-percent rise in current transfers, mostly from OFWs, as well as the 165-percent improvement in offshore income.

BSP Governor Rafael Buenaventura said a government inter-agency committee on trade statistics had agreed to adjust import data to correct the understatement of consigned raw materials for electronics. This provided a better representation of the electronics industry, which is more import-dependent than what was suggested by the old numbers.

"This adjustment resulted in a wider trade deficit that consequently reduced the CA balance in the BOP," Buenaventura said, explaining that the numbers were preliminary pending the release by the National Statistics Office of the final export and import figures in late April.

Among the other changes in the BOP computation were:

- Inclusion of OFW remittances coursed through the informal channels, mitigating the downward effect of adjustments in exports of goods and imports;
- Trade credits are now based on surveys and external debt reports, unlike the previous system where trade receivables and payables were derived from data on shipments of goods and payments, and
- OFWs are now split into residents (income account) and non-residents (current transfers) in accordance with a one-year residency rule recommended in the BOP manual.

The country's BOP last year posted a deficit of $280 million, from a surplus of $115 million in 2003. The strong CA position was overwhelmed by the weak capital and financial account—covering direct and portfolio investments—which posted a deficit of $1.69 billion, up from $1.5 billion in 2003.

For the fourth quarter alone, the BOP yielded a deficit of $104 million, a reversal of the $887 million worth of surplus in the same period the previous year. This was attributed largely to the higher net outflow of capital and financial account.

The CA remained in a surplus in the fourth quarter at $1.66 billion or 6.7 percent of gross domestic product, higher than the $950 million a year ago or 4.3 percent of GDP.

"The lower trade-in-goods deficit and the steady inflow of workers remittances lifted the fourth quarter CA surplus by 74.7 percent from previous year's level," Buenaventura said.

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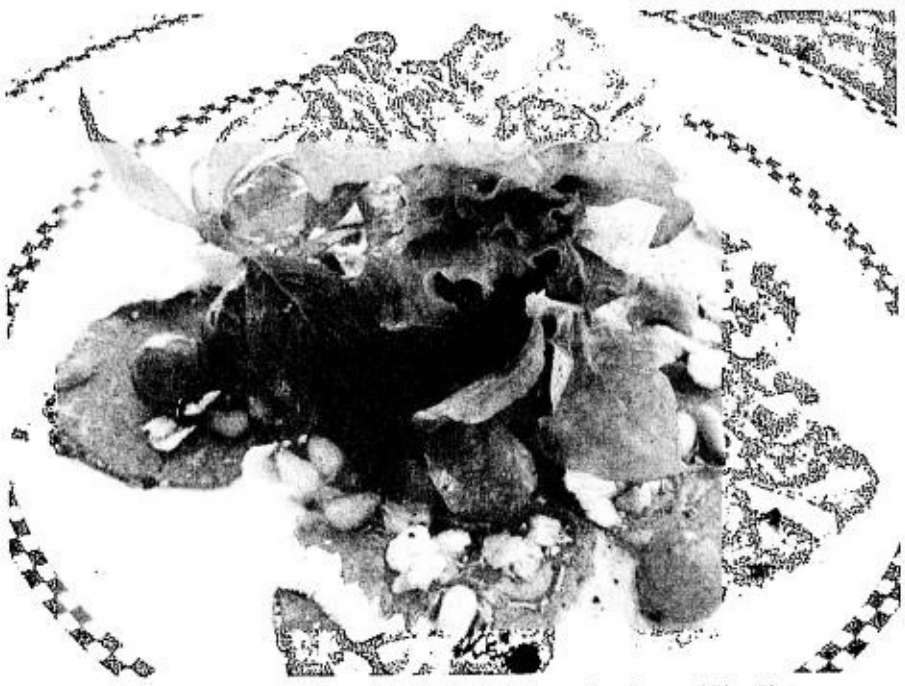


LE BELLEVUE Lemon-scented Carpaccio of Beef, Parmesan Shavings and Pine Nuts

Play-dough from a mom, Roast Chicken from a chef

Here is a poultry recipe that is good even without the Idiot Gravy, but why forego the gravy when it's a breeze to make?

KITCHEN RESCUE

Reggie Aspiras

MY KIDS are crazy over Play-Doh but it's too expensive. I heard that you can make play-dough with ingredients from the kitchen. I will understand if I don't get a reply, as this is not related to cooking. If this is not possible, may I just have an easy recipe for roast chicken with garlic? Please make it a simple one. Being a working mom of four, I don't have much time.

MRS. LEDESMA

What a combination! I thought roast chicken went with roasted vegetables or mashed potatoes or green salad! Like *adobo't sinangag, chicharon at suka*, or *puto't dinuguan*. But roast chicken and play-dough?

But, this being Easter week, there is much to celebrate so you don't just get play-dough but also recipes for roast chicken, roasted vegetables and even my Idiot Gravy! I call it that because anyone can do it, takes no more than five minutes and doesn't at all taste like it started from a can! But this chicken can stand alone, even without the gravy.

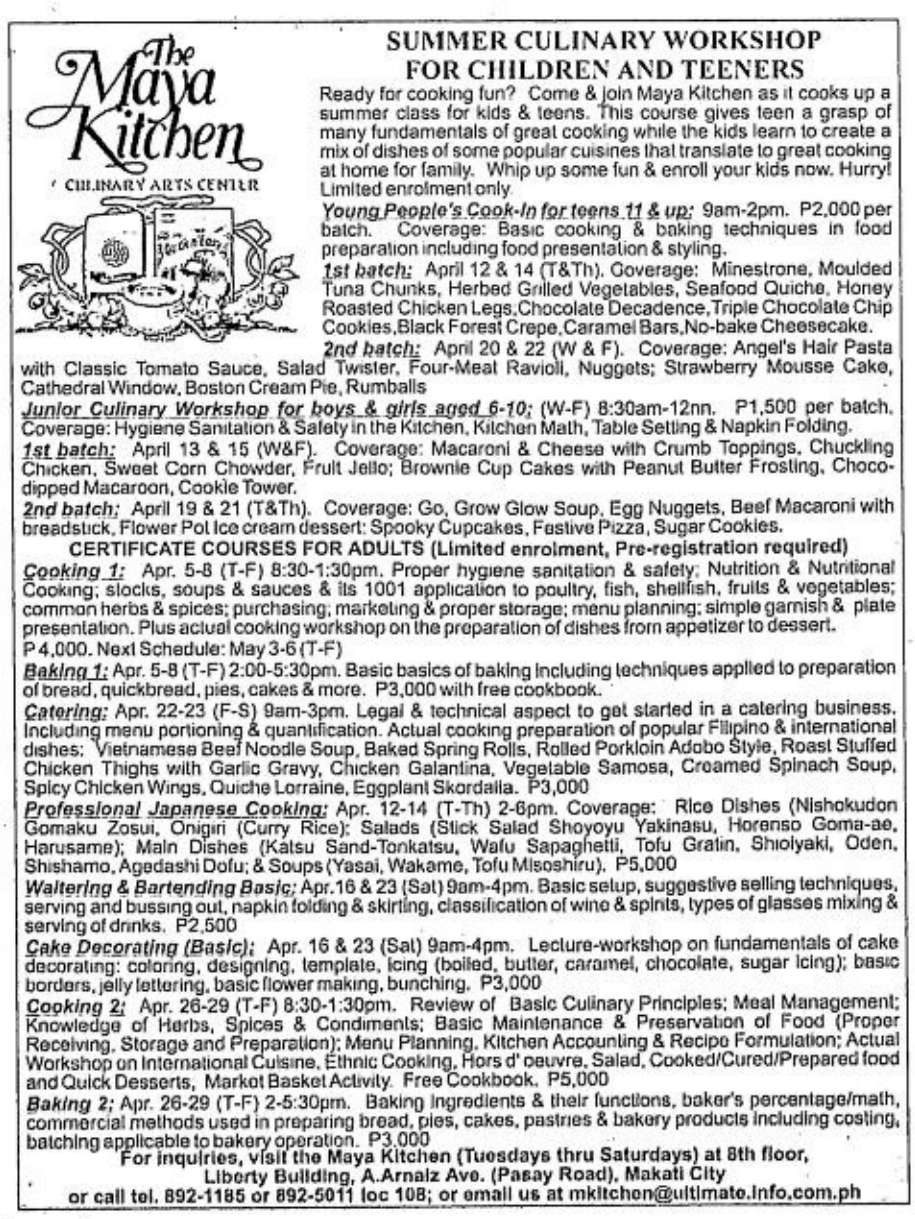
The dough recipe is from my niece, Monique, who is also a mom of four and has actually played with it in her house. I think it keeps better and stays softer far longer than the real thing.

I hope the play-dough gives you hours of much-needed serenity. As for the roast chicken, well, I hope it keeps those little tummies filled and happy!

Garlic Roast Chicken with Vegetables, Idiot Gravy and Play-Dough

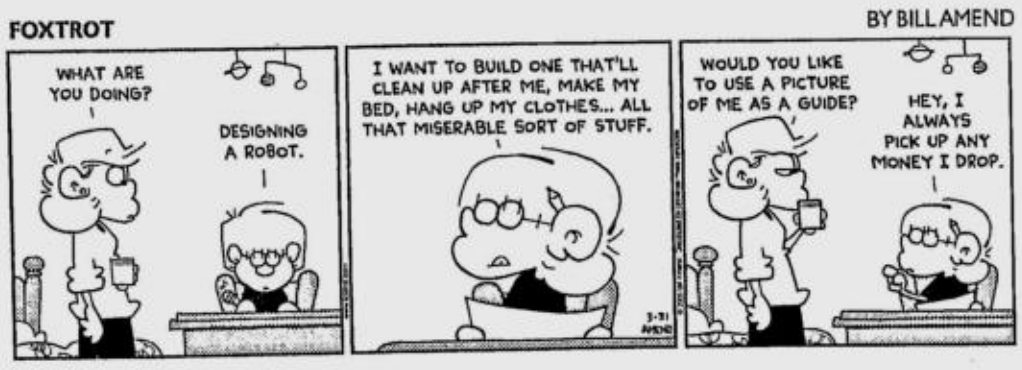
1 chicken, cleaned
2 tbsp olive oil
3 tsp salt
1 tsp freshly ground black pepper
2 heads of garlic, peeled and pounded

PLAY-DOUGH/ C4



FOXTROT

BY BILL AMEND



A. LIPIN

BY JESS ABRERA

MARVIN

BY TOM ARMSTRONG

PUGAD BABOY

BY P.M. JUNIOR

BABY BLUES

BY JERRY SCOTT

MUTTS

BY PATRICK McDONNELL

ATOMO AND WEBOY

BY LYRA GARCELLANO

DIVINE COMEDY

BY STEVEN PABALINAS

MIKROKOSMOS

BY JOMIKE TEJIDO

BEN

BY DANIEL SHELTON

KIKO MACHINE

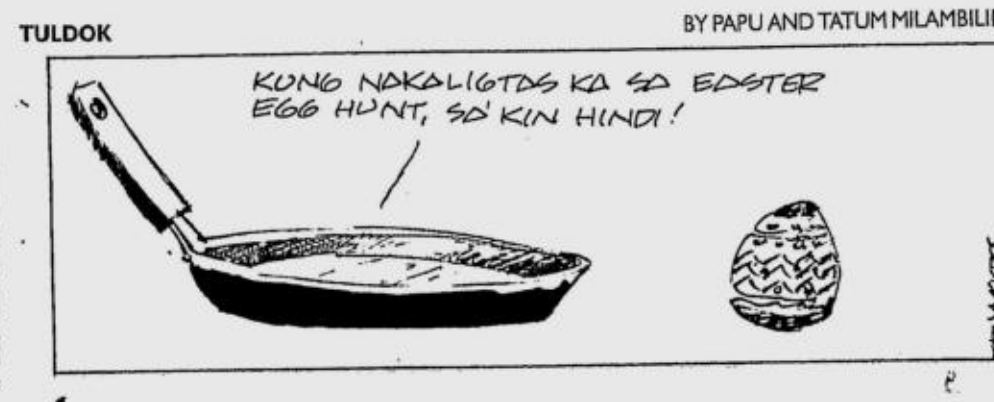
BY MANIX ABRERA

LOVEKNOTS

BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO

TULDOK

BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING



HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCIS DRAKE

YOU BORN TODAY: Once you set your mind on something, you hang in there. You're a fighter and will go after what you want. You have determination and tenacity. You're also practical and flexible. This combination means you'll get ahead in the world. Expect big changes this year. Just go with the flow and be open to what arises.
Birthdate of: Shirley Jones, actress/singer; Pavel Bure, hockey player; Ewan McGregor, actor.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): You're bursting with bright ideas today. You want to do everything and go everywhere. You also want to tell others how to do things better. (You might want to sugarcoat things in order to keep the peace.)

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): This is great day for research, especially into matters related to other countries, publishing, the media and universities. You have the energy to dig deep for what you want to know.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): Conversations with others are lively today! People have a lot to tell you; you have a lot to tell them. You might join a group that has a strong agenda or purpose.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): You're not afraid to tell others what you think today. This is the day to talk to the boss. You can also stand up for yourself with a parent or any other authority figure.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): Make travel plans now. You've been itching to go someplace. You want to broaden your horizons. Now is the time to act. Be bold!

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): Your research skills are excellent today. You have the energy and drive to plow through a lot of boring details. Tackle matters connected with wills, inheritances, taxes and debt.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): You like to keep the peace. Nevertheless, you must voice your own feelings, likes and dislikes. Today is the day to talk to someone close to you about your concerns.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): You're convinced you're right about something at work. That's why you're jumping up and down about it with coworkers. Pull back a little. Easy does it.

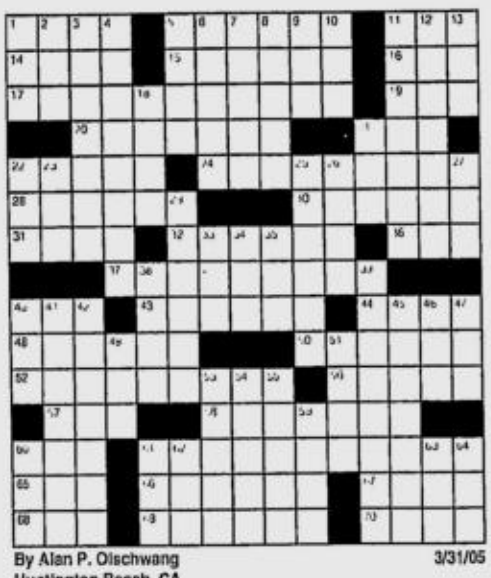
SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): What a playful, fun-loving day! Enjoy good times with friends. See a movie. Plan a party. Flirt with your main squeeze.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): This is the perfect day to handle small repairs at home. It's also a good day for family discussions. You have the energy to defend your own best interests.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): Your mind is abuzz today. You feel bright, awake and eager to learn new things. This is also a busy day filled with errands and short trips, plus talking to everyone!

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): You have wonderful moneymaking ideas today. You're on the ball! Write them down or tell others about your plans.

DAILY CROSSWORD



ACROSS
1 Prohibits
5 Cook book formula
11 Bks. balancer
14 Adam's second son
15 Battery terminals
16 Shutout spoiler
17 Start of Grace Murray Hopper quote
19 Container with a tap
20 Lasker of chess
21 Three of mummies?
22 Bindlestiff
24 Part 2 of quote
28 Like unopened e-mail
30 Vexed
31 Pravda's news agcy.
32 Lent follower
36 Part of CBS?
37 Part 3 of quote
40 Utter sharply
43 Worn away
44 Fencer's foil
48 Finally!
50 Chafe
52 Part 4 of quote
56 Organic compound
57 Canard
58 Apple choice
60 Stimpy's pal
61 End of quote
65 Shoshone
66 Las Vegas worker
67 Continental currency
68 Mal de __
69 Not quite
70 Multitude

DOWN
1 Merino's cry
2 6-pack muscles
3 Listens to again
4 Superlatively willowy
5 Liquid weather
6 Boredom
7 Makes do
8 Heartthrobs
9 For each
10 Winter hrs. in Philly
11 Go to pieces
12 Goes after
13 Novelist Beattie
18 Hemingway's nickname
21 Sniggler's prey
22 Palindromic pharaoh
23 Genetic initials
25 Table timetable
26 Gambler's card game
27 49-ers' 6-pointers
29 Severe shortage
33 Trinidad sprinter Boldon
34 Entertaining Caesar
35 Hemi-fly?
38 Pianist Myra
39 Destructive insects
40 Uncooked
41 Sports figure
42 More evident
45 Sore
46 Roush or Byrnes
47 Shoe-box letters
49 Had a little lamb
51 Wail
53 Twin __ suspension
54 Cellist Casals
55 Swings around
59 Malicious gossip
60 Grog ingredient
61 Oklahoma town
62 Sib
63 Mine find
64 Altercation

By Alan P. Olschwang
Huntington Beach, CA
3/31/05

Wednesday's Puzzle Solved

P	A	S	T	E		A	M	P	S		S	T	E	M
A	N	I	O	N		W	I	R	E		A	I	D	A
C	O	R	P	O	R	A	T	E	L	A	D	D	E	R
A	N	F			O	R	T	S		L	I	F	N	S
			S	H	A	D		O	D	E	S			
		P	O	W	E	R	S	T	R	U	C	T	U	R	E
M	U	S	E	R	S			O	T	B			T	A	T
A	N	T	E	S			S	A	S			H	A	U	T	E
S	C	I			P	O	I			S	A	B	R	E	S
C	H	A	I	N	O	F	C	O	M	M	A	N	D		
			M	I	S	I			G	E	M	S			
A	D	A	P	T			S	A	R	A				A	I	D
S	O	C	I	A	L	H	I	E	R	A	R	C	H	Y
A	D	E	S			S	O	D	S			B	A	T	O	N
P	O	S	H			T	E	E	S			S	W	I	P	E

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GASFAR
fuel saving tips
DON'T IDLE YOUR CAR FOR MORE THAN 1 MINUTE
Did you know that 10 seconds of idling uses more fuel than restarting your engine? An idling and not moving vehicle is getting its worst fuel economy - 0 km/liter.

Bigger thirst quenchers

NUTRI-LICIOUS Juice Drinks, the no-preservative beverages, are now available in one liter Tetra Brik packs.

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The juice in its new packaging with easy and convenient flip-top cap is now available in leading supermarkets and grocery stores nationwide.

Nutri-licious Juice Drinks are manufactured by Nutri-licious Foods Corporation, one of the country's leading producers and exporters of premium fruit juices and other beverages.

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10% discount for early bird registration and payment before April 06, 2005)
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• Afternoon Snack at Lake Springs Caliraya
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• Paete - St James the Apostle Church
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• Boat Tour of Lake Caliraya
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@ the Knowledge & Learning Centre
In celebration of our 25th anniversary, British Council's Knowledge and Learning Centre (KLC) lines up a series of summer activities for children aged 7-16 years old.
Reading Shakespeare
An introduction to Shakespeare's Classics
14-16 years old
18-22 April 2005 (1:00 - 4:00 PM)
Facilitated by Ani Rosa Almario of Adarna Publishing House
Acting Shakespeare
A teens' theatre workshop
14-16 years old
25-29 April 2005 (1:00 - 4:00 PM)
Facilitated by Ana Valdes-Lim of Philippine Playhouse
Arts Mania
An arts and crafts workshop
8-13 years old
2-6 May 2005 (1:00 - 4:00 PM)
Facilitated by Ilustrador ng Kabataan
Reading Clinic
A workshop to enhance children's reading skills
7-9 years old
9-13 May 2005 (1:00 - 4:00 PM)
Facilitated by Bing Balayon of De La Salle University
Workshop fee: P3,500. First come, first served. Limited slots available. For more information please call 9141011 to 14 or visit www.britishcouncil.org.ph. The British Council is located at the 10th Floor, Taipan Place, Emerald Avenue, Ortigas Centre, Pasig City
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April 2, Saturday, BASIC BAKING 1, 8:30am 12:30 pm Do you love baking but haven't a clue how to proceed? This completely hands-on class will help you produce light as air cakes and delicate baked goods: Chiffon Cake, Coffee Crunch Cake, Sponge Cake, Strawberry and While Chocolate Trifle, Rich Butter Cake, American Apple Pie (Next Schedule April 16) P 1800
April 2, Saturday,2:30 to 5:30 pm AUTHENTIC PEKING DUCK, learn now to prepare one of China's great culinary creations in your own home; from the purchase and preparation of the duck to the making of the pancake P 1800
April 6, Wednesday, 2:00 to 5:30 pm MASTERING CHEESECAKES learn all the essentials of producing perfect cheesecakes, both baked and unbaked, different crusts and toppings: Classic New York Cheesecake, Maida Heatter's Bullseye Cheesecake, No Bake Lemon and Raspbery Cheesecakes, Smoked Salmon and Chive Hors d'Oeuvres Cheesecake P1,800
April 7 Thursday, 2:00 to 6:00 pm FRUIT FLAVORED CAKES My all-time best sellers: Ube Cake, Original Pandan Cake, Strawberry Shortcake, Mango Cake P1,600
April 8, Friday, 2:00 to 6:00 pm CAKE ICING 101 In this course, you will learn to produce perfectly iced cakes with different fillings and frostings. Learn the techniques of expertly dividing up cake layers and applying a professional look to all your cakes . Each student will take home an individually decorated cake. P1600
April 9, Saturday, 8:30 to 12:30 ÉCLAIRS AND CREAM PUFFS Turn Pate a Choux paste into sweet and savory delights, also included are sauces and garnishes, Crème Anglaise, Chocolate Sauce, Beignet au Jambon, Gougere, Fruit Coulis P1600
April 9, Saturday, 2:30 to 6:00 ARGENTINE STEAKHOUSE Empanadas de Carne, Gambas a la Parilla, Churrasco, Chimichurri, Salsa Criolla, Papas Al Horno, Palm Heart Salad, Dulce de Leche P 1,800
April 11 and 12, Monday and Tuesday, 2:00 to 6:00 2 DAY CLASS ON BRIOCHE AND CROISSANTS This workshop will teach you techniques to master different variations of the Brioche and Croissant dough, Pans au Chocolat, au Jambon, etc. P2500
April 13, Wednesday, 2:00 pm to 5: 30 pm AWESOME SOUPS AND SANDWICHES Creamy Potato and Leek Soup, Dijon Mayonaise, Peanut Butter with Banana and Honey on Brioche, New England Clam Chowder, Fish and Chips, The Dagwood P1600
April 14, Thursday, 2:30 to 6:00 pm PICKLES, CHUTNEY AND DIPPING SAUCES learn the use of a wide range of Asian condiments to give dishes a unique flavor and character: Tandoori Shrimp and Pineapple Chutney, Daikon, Carrot and Cucumber Pickles, Korean BBQ Beef with Spicy Herbal Rice Vinegar and Soy Dipping Sauce, Sweet and Spicy Korean Chili Paste, Chicken with Thai Sate Sauce, Banana Springrolls with Lemongrass Infused Coconut Dipping Sauce P 1600
April 15, Friday, 8:30am to 12: 30 pm CROQUEMBOUCHE Learn how to make éclair paste (pate a choux) and to assemble it into this traditional French-stlye Wedding Cake – a pyramid of cream puffs and caramel P 1800
April 15, Friday, 5:30 to 9:00 pm, NEW YORK LATINO, Latin cafes, predominantly Puerto Rican and Dominican have been quietly changing the way New Yorkers eat. Come learn the recipes that have been staples of the city dining scene: Pernil, Sancocho, Mangu, Arroz con Pollo, Chayote Salad P 1600
April 16, Saturday, 8:30 to 12:30 pm BASIC BAKING 1 (See April 2)
April 16, Saturday, 2:30 to 6:00 pm, PANCAKES, CREPES, BELGIAN WAFFLES AND SYRUPS Apple Pancakes, Banana Sour Cream Pancakes with Date Nut Butter, Ricotta Crepes with Strawberry Wine Jam, Spinach and Mushroom Crepes, Pecan Waffles with Cherry Butter, Pumpkin Waffles P 1, 600
April 18, 19 and 20, 3 DAY JAPANESE WORKSHOP, Mon., Tues., Wed., 2 to 5:30pm 1st Day Japanese Stock and Sauce Preparation: Dashi, Ponzu Sauce, Tempura Sauce, Okomiyaki Sauce, Teriyaki Sauce; Fried Preparation: Tempura, Tempura Pancake, Ebi tobuta no kawari-age (Fried Shrimp or Pork Cracker), Teriyaki Salmon, Grilled Fish, Ponzu Tossed Salad, Stewing Pork, Okomiyaki, Gyoza, Rice Cooked with Mushrooms, Sukiyaki, Tonkatsu, Warabi Mochi P 3800
April 20, Wednesday, 8:30 am to 12:30 pmITALIAN BOLOGNESE, Minestrone Soup, Sauce Bechamel, Sauce Bolognese, Pasta, Lasagne, Cannelloni, Zabaglioni P 1,600
April 21, Thursday, CANTONESE COOKING Steamed Spareribs with Pickled Plums and Bean Sauce, Chicken Velvet and Corn Soup, Baked Salt and Pepper Shrimp, Sliced Beef with Chinese Vegetables in Black Bean Sauce, Sliced Fish with Tzing Gwa P 1600
April 22, Friday, 8:30 am – 12:30 pm PINOY SHORT ORDERS Tapa, Lumpiang Shanghai, Lumpiang Ubod. Siomai, Pancit Luglog , Fruit Salad P 1,600
April 22, Friday 5:30 – 8:30 pm FILIPINO FAMILY COOKING Pochero, Pato Tim, Chicken Pastel, Chicken Croquetas, Pancit Molo P 1,800
April 23, Saturday, 8:30 to 12:30 BAKESHOP FAVOURITES, Lengua de Gato, Maple Cinnamon Rolls, Talsan, Mamon, Apple-Upside Down Cake, Crinkles P 1,500
April 23, Saturday, 2:30 to 5:30pm BARS AND COOKIES Brownies and bar cookies are some of the most popular snacks and desserts, and they can be made quickly and easily at home; Food for the Gods, Lemon Squares, Mississippi Mudcake Bars, Russian Tea Cookies, Decadent Brownies P 1,600
April 25, Monday, 2 to 5:30 pm, COMFORT FOODS Lasagna, Macaroni and Cheese, Tacos, Thin-Crust Pizza with assorted toppings, Cream of Mushroom Soup, Mini Apple Pies ala Mode, Brownies ala Mode P1600
April 26, Tuesday, 2 to 6 pm PASTA-THE BASICS
Learn the techniques of making brilliant flavorful pastas at home. Learn how to match sauces with pasta shapes and get maximum flavor from your ingredients. Fettucine Alfredo, Spaghetti Carbonara, Pasta Putanesca, Pasta Bolognese, Penne with Pesto Genovese, Linguine with Tomato and Basil Sauce P 1600
April 27, Wednesday, 2:30-5:30pm VIETNAMESE COOKING Spring Rolls, Shrimp Mousse on Sugar Cane, Crab and Pomelo Salad, Crispy Rice Pancake, Braised Mushrooms, Fried Bean Curd with Lemon Grass, Grilled Pork & Pinapple Salad P1600
April 28, Thursday, 2.30-5:30pm THAI FAVORITES Tom Yum Goong, Pandan Chicken, Shrimp Pancake, Green Mango Salad, Beef Curry, Phad Thai, Ta-ko P1600
April 29, Friday, 5.30 to 8:30 ASIAN COOKING Hainan Chicken Rice, Springrolls, Spicy Kangkong, Chili Crab, Claypot Chicken Rice, Mango/Sticky Rice P 1,600
April 30, Saturday, 8:30 to 12:30, SUPERB PIES, French Apple Pie, Lemon Meringue Pie, Buko Pie, Quiche Lorraine P 1600
April 30, Saturday, 2:30-5:30 pm, NYONYA COOKING Stir-Fried Water Spinach (Kang Kung Belacan), Stir-Fried Tamarind Shrimp (Udang Asam), Nyonya Shrimp and Pineapple Curry (Udang Masak Nenas), Nyonya Chicken and Potato Stew (Ayam Pong Teh), Sambal Belacan, Plantians with Coconut Milk and Palm Sugar (Kolak Pisang) P1600
All classes are hands-on. Please bring aprons and big containers. Portions are generous.
WEDDING CAKES: We are now accepting orders for our sumptuous New York wedding cakes. Each tier is made of sponge layers laced with liqueurs, delicious praline, chocolate and fruit fillings, covered with French Buttercream and handmade flowers. Our cakes are meant to be shared with your guests and will be a fitting finale to your meal. Appointments must be scheduled.

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Summer coolers

CRAVINGS welcomes the hot dry season with its "Summer Coolers."

Until May 31, all Cravings outlets, including Monsoon Restaurant, offer a wide variety of thirst quenchers.

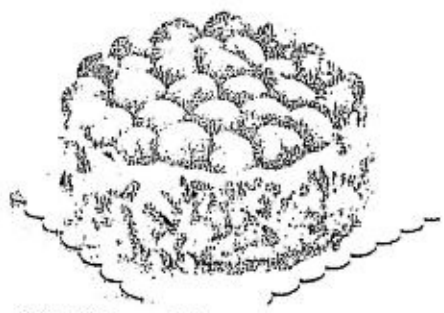
A "Halo-Halo Bar" is also set up in Cravings outlets. Enjoy a mix of red and white beans, jackfruit, gelatin, tapioca pearls, chix peas, *kaong*, *nata de coco*, banana, *ube* and custard, topped with plenty of shaved ice, milk, sugar, a scoop of ice cream and toasted *pinipig* flakes.

Fruit Shakes and Smoothies are available in Four Seasons, Banana and Mango Freeze, *Piña* Colada, Melon Lychee and Honey Watermelon.

The soda fountain offers other cool delights: Banana Split with vanilla, strawberry and chocolate ice cream, topped with crushed pineapple, chopped nuts, cherries, whipped cream and chocolate sauce; Peach Melba served with sweet peach slices, two scoops of vanilla ice cream, and flavored with strawberry sauce, whipped cream and almond flakes; Chocolate Sundae, with three scoops of ice cream drizzled with hot fudge sauce, chopped nuts, whipped cream and cherries.

The bakeshop has four new cakes: Four Seasons, with four layers of mousse on a bed of soft chiffon with slices of tropical fruits; Jeweled Fruit and Cheese Gateau has cream cheese and butter filling in cookie crumb crust, topped with fruits and gelatin; Melon Cream Cake has layers of chiffon on a meringue base filled with cream and melon slices, adorned with toasted almond flakes, melon and honeydew balls; and Mango Dream Pie, mango custard topped with slices of ripe mango on a flaky pie crust, with whipped cream and chopped praline candies.

Call 6891111. Check out Cravings outlets: Katipunan; Metrowalk, Ortigas; Tomas Morato; Shangri-La Mall; Robinson's Galleria; Robinson's Place Manila; Fraser Place Serviced Residence; and Festival Mall. Soon-to-open is Cravings West Avenue.



MELON Cream Cake

FOUR Seasons

Play-dough from a mom, Roast Chicken from a chef

From page C1

2 sprigs fresh rosemary or 2 tsp dried
2 sprigs thyme or 1 tsp dried
1 lemon, quartered

Rub chicken all over with olive oil. Season with salt and pepper.

Combine garlic and herbs, and stuff into cavity of chicken. Stuff lemon into cavity, too. Marinate chicken overnight. If you don't have time to marinate, continue on with recipe and it will still taste delicious.

Bake on a pre-heated 350° F oven for 45 minutes covered with foil.

Make garlic mixture.

After 45 minutes, remove foil. Continue to cook chicken for 15 more minutes then pour garlic mixture over chicken. Continue to cook uncovered for another 15-20 minutes or until chicken is golden brown.

Garlic Mixture

1 cup garlic cloves
2 tbsp extra-virgin olive oil
2 tbsp melted butter
¼ tsp salt
¼ tsp ground black pepper
2 tbsp parsley

Combine ingredients in a blender. Process until mixture is a coarse puree.

Vegetables

½ k marble potatoes, small potatoes scrubbed clean
¼ k each of squash, carrots, zucchini, quartered
¼ k cherry tomatoes, whole
1 ½ tsp salt
½ tsp black pepper
¼ c olive oil

Place vegetables, except zucchini and tomatoes, in a bowl. Season with salt and pepper.

Drizzle with olive oil and place in a roasting pan roast for 40 minutes.

After 20 minutes, toss vegetables and add tomatoes and zucchini. Serve with chicken.

Idiot Gravy

1 tbsp onion powder
1 tbsp garlic powder
½ c chicken stock +/-, adjust according to desired consistency of gravy
¼ c red wine, optional (but I say with)
1 can Campbell's Mushroom Soup
1 tbsp brown sauce, optional (but I say with), available in Santis,
2 c fresh button mushrooms, sliced
1 sprig each of fresh thyme and rosemary or ½ tsp dry salt and pepper to taste

Combine in a saucepan, whisking until thick. Season to taste.

Play-Dough

1 c flour
½ c fine salt
1 c water
2 tsp cream of tartar
1 tsp vegetable oil
Food coloring

Mix ingredients, except food coloring, in pan then cook for three minutes over low heat. Mix with a whisk.

Add food color and knead until combined.

Carpaccio lover

Do you have a recipe for *carpaccio*? I love it but don't really know what it is.

J. OLONDRIZ

Carpaccio is an Italian concoction served as an appetizer, traditionally of thin slices of raw beef drizzled with olive oil and lemon juice, often topped with capers and parmigiano. Today, however, the renditions are endless, even fish is made into carpaccio!

I do have recipes but I'm sharing Chef Braun's version. The *salsa verde*, though, is from me.

Le Bellevue Lemon-scented Carpaccio of Beef, Parmesan Shavings and Pine Nuts

80 g beef tenderloin, sliced thin
20 g mixed lettuce
1 g basil leaves
10 g parmesan shavings
2 g pine nuts, toasted
30 ml lemon olive oil dressing (1 tbsp. olive oil, 1½ tsp lemon juice, salt and pepper)
Black pepper
5 g cherry tomatoes
10 ml salsa verde

Brush plate with olive oil.

Place beef shavings on plate and set greens in the middle.

Sprinkle pine nuts around the plate.

Add parmesan shavings, tomatoes. Pour over dressing.

Drizzle salsa verde.

Decorate with basil leaves.

Salsa Verde

Process these ingredients in a blender:

1/3 c extra-virgin olive oil
¼ c chopped fresh parsley
2 tbsp chopped fresh chives
2 tbsp capers, chopped
1 garlic clove, minced
¼ tsp each fresh thyme, tarragon, oregano, mint
2 tbsp fresh lemon juice

Spanish Terms 7

Plancha (a la)—grilled on a hot plate
Polvorones—Andalucian biscuits made from ground almonds and sugar
Postres—desserts
Potaje or sopa—soup
Rellenas—stuffed
Revueltos—scrambled

For comments or suggestions, text 0917-8399888.

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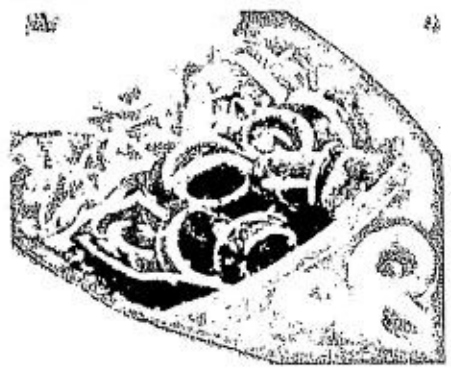
LIFESTYLE

Yes to fresh, light and healthy dishes

PORK Misono



SQUID Misono

FRESH ingredients and light seasoning don't usually go with the concept of fast-food but these are exactly what Tokyo Tokyo offers in its current "I Miss You, Misono!" promo. Featured for a limited time only are Squid Misono and Pork Misono in addition to the best-selling Beef and Tuna Misono.

Tokyo Tokyo is among the fast-food chains that support the Department of Health's campaign for healthy Filipino diet. It participated in the recent Dialogue on Healthy Diet organized by DOH among fastfood chains.

At Tokyo Tokyo, meat and vegetables are stir-fried on stainless-steel table-top "teppan" grills. Seasonings are usually limited to soy sauce, wine, vinegar, iodized salt and pepper, and a generous addition of garlic. The vegetable oil used for cooking is cholesterol-free.

Tokyo Tokyo's Misono dishes go well with Miso Soup, Sushi and Sashimi.

BEEF Misono

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Graduate : Full Course at Thai Cooking School, Oriental Hotel, Bangkok, Thailand
ERNEST REYNOSO GALA
Graduate : Full Course at Thai Cooking School, Oriental Hotel, Bangkok, Thailand
Studied at Chopstick and Hongkong Town Gas Culinary Schools
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Leni Reynoso-Araullo
CERTIFIED WILTON METHOD SCHOOL INSTRUCTOR, Chicago, U.S.A.
Masters in Cake Decorating, Wilton School, Chicago, U.S.A., 1974 under Martha & Stanley Wilton
Graduate : Chicago School of Cooking and Catering
Graduate : Full Course, Thai Cooking School at the Oriental Hotel, Bangkok
Studied cooking in Europe, South America & Hongkong
Co-founder, Reynoso Cooking and Baking School, March, 1963

APR 5, 12, 19 - CHILDREN'S COOKING & BAKING COURSE (3) TUESDAYS - 2:30 - 5:30PM P2,700 - INCLUDING INGREDIENTS. FOR CHILDREN AGES 6 TO 12 YEARS OLD. OVEN-BAKED CHICKEN DRUMSTICKS & POTATOES, SHRIMP ALA KING IN MUFFIN CUPS; PARTY FRUIT SALAD IN ICE CREAM CONES; CHEESE MACAROONS, RAISIN WALNUT COOKIES; MEATLOAF SUPREME; YUMMY SPARERIBS W/ COLESLAW SALAD, MAGNOLIA CHICKEN SPAGHETTI W/ MUSHROOMS; PHILADELPHIA CREAM CHEESE CHEWY BARS, TINY FRUIT CAKE BARS; CHOCO-PEANUTS IN PIE CRUST. *THIS COURSE IS GIVEN ONLY ONCE-A-YEAR BY ERNEST & SYLVIA IN MANILA. CALL MORELLA FOR BAGUIO SCHEDULE. ONLY 30 STUDENTS WILL BE ACCOMMODATED. PAID RESERVATION IS A MUST. THANK YOU.*

APR 6 - WED -2:30 - 6:15PM - LIGHT & AIRY ENSAYMADAS - CHEESEROLLS. SPECIAL EGG PAN-DESAL, PANDESAL W/ FILLING, CINNAMON ROLLS, BREAD MAKING MADE EASY! **P1,200. BY SYLVIA**

APR 7 THU - 2:30 - 6:00PM - OPEN A PIZZA PARLOR - LEARN TO MAKE THESE ITALIAN FAVORITES. MOZARELLA-TOPPED - BIG & THICK CRUST PIZZAS (BAKED IN RECTANGULAR PAN), THIN CRUST PIZZA W/ DIFFERENT TOPPINGS, FETTUCINE ALFREDO, SPAGHETTI, CARBONARA, BREADED VEAL STEAKS W/ LEMON, PEACH-FILLED CREPES W/ FRUIT SAUCE PLUS 12 BONUS RECIPES OF PASTAS & SANDWICHES **P1,200. BY ERNEST**

APR 8 FRI - 2:30 - 5:45PM 9 MONEY-MAKING FOR TEENS & ADULT BEGINNERS - CHOCOLATE CHIP COOKIES, CHOCOLATE CRINKLES, BUTTERSCOTCH BROWNIES, LENGUA DE GATO, CHEWY MALLOW BARS, RUSSIAN TEA COOKIES, VIRGIE PANTALEON'S DATE WALNUT COOKIES, SPECIAL POLVORON, LEBANESE SATE BOAT TARTS **P1,200. BY ERNEST**

APR 9 SAT - 2:30 - 6:15PM LEARN THE SOFTEST SIOPAO DOUGH EVER! - THE MOST DELICIOUS SIOMAI, KUA PAO, (PEKING SIOPAO W/ MEAT FILLING & PICKLED MUSTASA), FISH HEAD SOUP, CAMARON RELLENADO, QUIKIAM W/ RADISH SALAD, STEAMED LAPU-LAPU **P1,200. BY SYLVIA**

APR 11 MON - 2:30 - 5:30PM - MAX'S STYLE FRIED CHICKEN JOLLIBEE STYLE CHICKEN W/ GRAVY, CHICKEN BURGER, DELICIOUS POTATO SALAD, SIZZLING GRILLED PORKCHOPS, 4 SEASONS PUNCH, RIPE MANGO JUICE, MELON TAPIOCA W/ SAGO, GREEN MANGO JUICE **P1,200. BY SYLVIA**

APR 13 WED - 2:30 - 5:30PM - PASTAS & SALAD FESTIVALS! 8 DELICIOUS RECIPES! BEEFY CHEESY BAKED MACARONI, SPAGHETTI W/ PHILADELPHIA CREAM SAUCE, MEXICAN CORNMEAL CASSEROLE, SCALLOPED POTATOES, SMOTHERED W/ KRAFT MOZARELLA CHEESE, CHICKEN ASPARAGUS SALAD, CENTURY TUNA APPLE SALAD, VEGETABLE BOWL W/ FRENCH DRESSING, MELTINGLY DELICIOUS EGG CASSEROLE **P1,200. BY ERNEST**

APR 14 THU 2:30 - 6:00PM - POLLO IBERICO (SOFT TO THE BONE SPANISH GARLIC ROASTED CHICKEN W. BABY POTATOES) - MELTINGLY DELICIOUS SHRIMP SALAD, DE LUXE MEATLOAF, BONELESS PARTY FISH SALAD, HOW TO BAKE THE LIGHTEST PEACH CHIFFON CAKE W/ WHIPPING CREAM. **P1,200. BY SYLVIA**

APR 15 & APR 22 (2 FRIDAYS) MAKE MONEY BY LEARNING 15 DELICIOUS RECIPES IN 2 LESSONS. P1,800 - INCLUDING INGREDIENTS. A SPECIAL FRUITCAKE, 3 VERSIONS OF BROWNIES. (DOUBLE CHOCOLATE FUDGE, CHOCOLATE CARAMEL FUDGE, WALNUT-TOPPED DARK & LIGHT BARS) 5 DIFFERENT KINDS OF WELL-KNOWN MUFFINS, 5 DIFFERENT KINDS OF CHOCOLATE CHIP COOKIES, MACADAMIA NUT COOKIES. **FOR TEENAGERS & ABOVE. BY ERNEST**

APR 16 SAT - 2:30 - 6:00PM - PRACTICAL, EASY, DELICIOUS THAI COOKING 1 - CHICKEN GALANGA COCONUT SOUP, RED CURRY CHICKEN, GREEN CURRY CHICKEN, BEEF CURRY, CHICKEN ON A BED OF SPINACH W/ PEANUT SAUCE, BAKED RICE IN PINEAPPLE SHELL, THAI ICED TEA & THAI ICED COFFEE **P1,500. BY ERNEST & SYLVIA**

APR 18 MON 0 2:30 - 5:30PM MONEY-MAKING BAKESHOP CAKES FOR BEGINNERS. COFFEE CRUNCH CHIFFON CAKE W/ WHIPPED CREAM ICING. LENI'S #1 SELLING PRUNE WALNUT CAKE W. MAGNOLIA GOLD BUTTER ICING. ZENAIDA NICHOLAS' VERY LIGHT BLUEBERRY "TRUMPS' FAVORITE" CHEESECAKE. HOMEMADE RHUN CAKE W. FRESH ORANGE JUICE. **P1,200. BY SYLVIA**

APR 20 WED - 2:30 - 6:00PM POPULAR JAPANESE DISHES 2 - LEARN 8 DELICIOUS RECIPES! SHABU-SHABU W/ 2 SAUCES, ASSORTED CRISPY TEMPURA, GRILLED PORK & BEEF SLICE, UDON (VERY SPECIAL NOODLES) FRIED TOFU IN SPECIAL SAUCE, BREADED CHICKEN WINGS W/ VINEGAR SAUCE, JAPANESE MIXED FRIED RICE PLUS BONUS RECIPES OF COMPLETE SUSHI BAR. **P1,200. BY SYLVIA**

APR 21 THU - 2:30 - 6:00PM SPECIAL BARBECUE; BEEF TERIYAKI IN SKEWERS; PORK SPARERIBS W/ HOISIN SAUCE - MAGNOLIA CHICKEN DRUMSTICKS IN HONEY SAUCE, (SATE A JAM) CHICKEN SKEWERS IN PEANUT BEEF RIBS W/ PEKING NOODLES, DELICIOUS PORK SPARE RIBS, NEW KOREAN BEEF BARBECUE, NASIGORENG (INDONESIAN FRIED RICE); *FERNANDO MIGUEL ERENETA'S* CHICKEN HONEY, THE BEST PORK BARBECUE W/ SPECIAL PEANUT SAUCE. **P1,200. BY ERNEST**

APR 23 SAT - 2:30 - 6:00PM - THAI COOKING 2 - THAI CHICKEN BARBECUE, 5 SPICE BARBECUED PORK SPARERIBS, THAI CHICKEN SATAY, THAI FRIED FISH CAKES, GARLIC SQUIDS, CURRIED FISH WRAPPED IN BANANA LEAVES **P1,500. BY ERNEST & SYLVIA**

APR 25 MON 2:30 - 5:30PM - UBE CHIFFON CAKE; ROCKY ROAD. MOIST CHOCOLATE CAKE, FOOD FOR THE GODS & WALNUT BROWNIES. PLUS TIPS ON CONVERTING CAKES INTO JELLY ROLLS & MUFFINS. DELICIOUS CAKES SOLD IN TOP BAKESHOPS! ALL CAKES W/ DIFFERENT ICINGS! **P1,200. BY SYLVIA**

APR 26 TUE 2:30 - 6:00PM - THE BEST OVEN-BAKED PAELLA - ROAST STUFFED MAGNOLIA JUMBO CHICKEN, PASTEL DE LENGUA, CALLOS MADRILEÑA, BLACK FOREST #2 IDEAL FOR CATERERS & PARTY GIVERS. **P1,200. BY SYLVIA**

APR 27 WED 2:30 - 6:00PM - 2 KINDS OF ROASTBEEF - MONTEREY STANDING RIB-ROAST & BACON-WRAPPED BONELESS ROAST W/ GRAVY, CREMA DE FRUTA, SIZZLING SHIMPS IN GARLIC SAUCE, FRIED SQUID RINGS, CHICKEN ALEXNDER, SEAFOOD MEDLEY SOUP SERVED ON A CRUSTY BREADBOWL FROM FRENCH BAKER **P1,200. BY ERNEST**

APR 28 THU 2:30 - 5:30PM - SPECIAL LESSON ON MORE MONEY-MAKING OPPORTUNITIES - SAVORY STYLE FRIED CHICKEN, ROAST MONTEREY PORK LIEMPO, MRS. OLIVIA TEE'S FOOKIEN STYLE AMOY FRESH LUMPIA, PORK SIOMAI W/ QUAIL EGGS, HONGKONG SHRIMP SIOMAI, HACAO (SHRIMP DUMPLING W/ HOMEMADE CLEAR WRAPPER) **P1,200. BY SYLVIA**

APR 30 SAT 2:30 - 6:00PM THAI NOODLES, RICE, DESSERTS 3! (9 RECIPES) - THAI STREET NOODLES, PAD THAI, CURRIED NOODELS W/ BEEF, CRAB FRIED RICE, PORK FRIED RICE, BLACK RICE PUDDING, TAPIOCA PUDDING, THAI CUSTARD. SQUASH W/ COCONUT CREAM **P1,500. BY ERNEST & SYLVIA**

MAY 3 TUE 2:30 - 6:00PM - PUT UP A STEAKHOUSE - LEARN THE TECHNIQUES TO COOKING THE JUICIEST MONTEREY PORTERHOUSE STEAKS, BEEF TENDERLOIN STEAK A LA POBRE, DELICIOUS HOMEMADE GRAVY, CAESAR SALAD, ROAST ORANGE PORK LOIN, BEST-SELLING BAKED SPAGHETTI W/ 2 SAUCES, MAKE YOUR OWN CREPES SAMURAI **P1,200. BY ERNEST**

MAY 4 WED 2:30 - 6:30PM - BAGUIO'S FAMOUS RAISIN BREAD, AMERICAN TASTY HONEY BREAD, BUTTER BREAD, BRAIDED CHEESE BREAD, MORELLA & ERNEST BIG PAN-DESAL, SUPERSOFT CARMELITE BREAD IN A BUNDT PAN. DELICIOUS BREAD MADE EASY! **P1,200. BY SYLVIA**

MAY 5 THU 2:30 - 5:30PM - DELICIOUS RESTAURANT SPECIALTIES YOU WILL LOVE TO DO AT HOME! - GARLIC-ROASTED MAGNOLIA CHICKEN W/ PEPPER STEAK SAUCE, MONTEREY BEEF TENDERLOIN CUBES SALPICADO, FETTUCINE W/ 3 DIFFERENT SAUCES **PESTO (GARLIC BASIL), BLACK SQUID INK, CREAMY MAYO CHEESE.** HIGHLANDS SALAD W/ OLIVES & BLUE CHEESE DRESSINGS. HOT CARAMEL BANANA FUDGE BROWNIE PIE W/ CREAM PLUS BONUS RECIPES OF CENTURY TUNA BURGERS, BEEF BURGERS W/ DIFFERENT DRESSINGS. **P1,200. BY ERNEST**

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By Vangie Baga-Reyes

IN THE MOOD for something healthy like grilled food?

Visit Fiesta San Miguel and have a fill of your favorite meats and seafood that are grilled to perfection.

You can choose from chicken, pork and beef to the bounties of the sea, such as prawns, *lapu-lapu*, tuna belly, New Zealand mussels, scallops and squid, for a healthy eat-all-you-can a la carte lunch.

The daily lunch treat, "Grilla Mania" at Fiesta San Miguel, the popular Filipino outlet of Dusit Hotel Nikko, lets diners have unlimited servings of grilled delights.

Instead of laying out the choices on a table, diners choose what they want from the menu.

"This way diners are assured that the grilled food is served hot and comes off the grill at just the right doneness," says Gilbert Uy, Dusit's director of food and beverage.

Only choice meats from Monterey are prepared and grilled by the seasoned chefs of Fiesta San Miguel (tel. 8673333). The grilled meats are served on a platter with rice and *atsara* on the side.

Grilled seafood is brought to the diner's table still wrapped in tinfoil to preserve its natural juices and flavor.

All grilled dishes come with four flavorful sauces: garlic beer sauce, Cajun butter, butter peanut sauce and fish sauce with vinegar.

The lunch treat also comes with an unlimited serving of rice, a glass of Earth and Sky Iced Tea and a scoop of Magnolia ice cream.

A buffet of grilled meat costs P500++, grilled seafood P550++, and mixed meat and seafood combo P600++.

Grilla Mania runs the whole month of April.

DUSIT Hotel Nikko sous chef Joanne Limoanco presents the grilled dishes.

Seafood Medley

30 g each of squid, shrimp, scallop, *lapu-lapu*
60 ml lemon juice
5 g lemon rind
5 g chopped basil
10 g chopped garlic
60 ml olive oil
60 ml orange juice
salt and pepper to taste

Marinade seafoods with all other ingredients for 20 minutes before grilling. Arrange them in a foil (folded like a pocket). Put the foil on the griller and cook for 8-10 minutes.

Wait until the foil is "puffing" or starts turning into a "balloon." Use table knife to open the foil. Immediately serve while still hot off the grill.

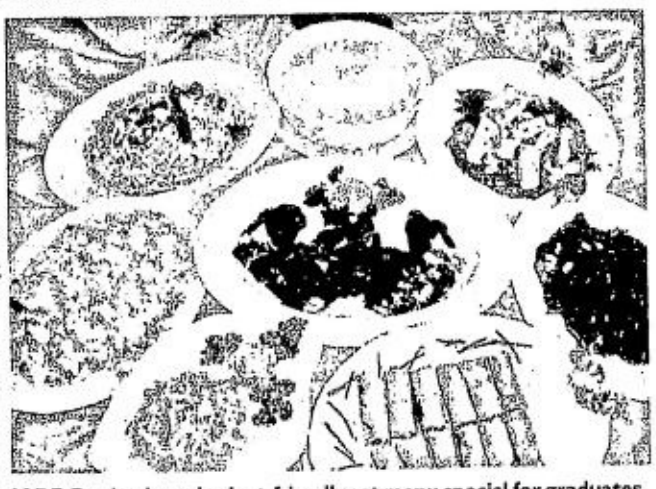
Grilled Beef

50-80 g beef tenderloin
For blackened Cajun marinade:
5 g Cajun seasoning
5 g cumin
5 g paprika
10 g parsley
10 g melted butter
10 g corn oil
salt and pepper to taste

Marinade the beef overnight with all the ingredients above. Then, put the meat on the griller. Cook for 5-10 minutes or according to desired doneness (medium, medium rare, medium well, well done).

SEAFOOD Medley—prawns, squids, mussels, scallops, tuna belly and *lapu-lapu* fillet

After graduation comes the feasting



JADE Garden has a budget-friendly set menu special for graduates that includes *kuchay* rolls with seaweed for appetizer, sweet corn with chicken soup, golden roast chicken, sweet and sour pork Jade Garden-style, fish fillets with bitter melon in *tausi* sauce, yeung chow fried rice, braised efu-noodles with mushrooms and chilled almond jelly for dessert. Ongoing until April 17, the graduation set menu costs P380/person for a reservation of five tables, and P350/person for 10 tables. Jade Garden Cantonese Restaurant is located at Greenbelt 1, Ayala Center, Makati. Call 8922319/8922636.

KIMPURA Japanese Restaurant will give one order of all-shrimp tempura for free to each table with one graduating student until April 17. The graduate must show his/her current school ID as proof and the bill should total at least P3,500+ to avail of the special promo. Kimpura is located at Glorietta 2, Ayala Center, Makati City (tels. 8932307/8924456) and Greenhills Shopping Center, San Juan (7218816/7218869).

DINING OUT

CASA ARMAS offers special package for graduates. Those who will avail of the graduation package will get a free bottle of Sta. Carolina wine. The package is priced at P3,500+ (5-7 persons); P5,500+ (8-10 persons); and P9,900+ (12-15 persons). Casa Armas has outlets at 3/L Greenbelt 3 (tel. 7574996), G/F The Podium (6873370) and Jupiter Street (8973605).

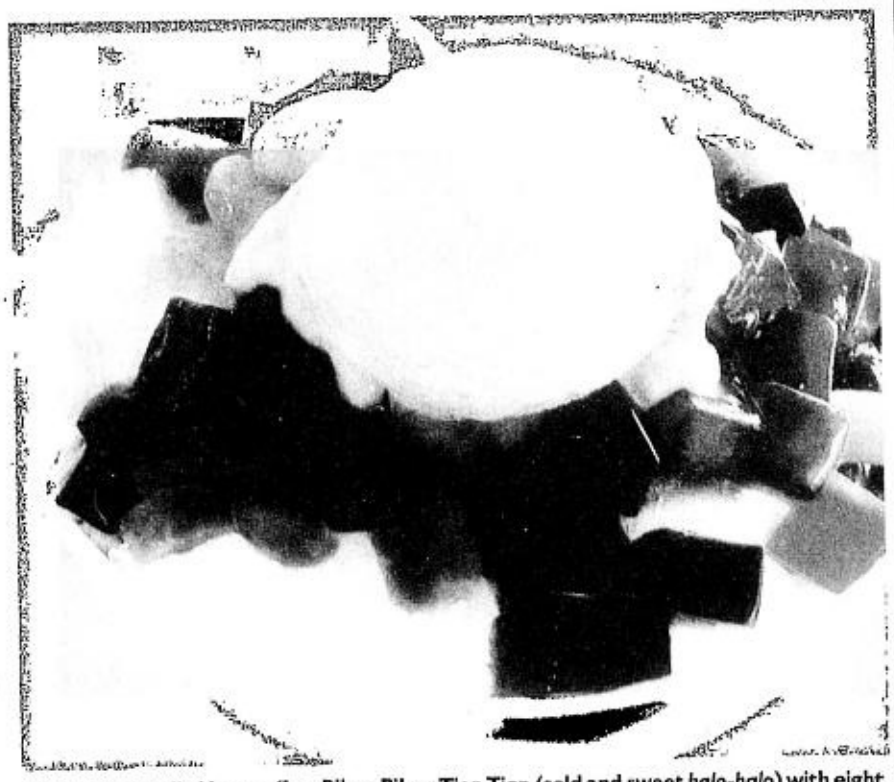
ARISTOCRAT Restaurant's Sound Treat promo gives graduates a free Crossover Rhythms compact disc. For P1,500, diners will get Hototai, Chicken Honey, Pancit Canton, Fish Fillet with Rice, Almond Jelly and Iced Tea. Promo runs until April 30. Aristocrat branches are in Roxas Boulevard, Jupiter in Makati and Robinsons Place, Manila. Call 5247671.

BURGOO American Bar and Restaurant is giving a 15-percent discount to graduates who will dine in any of its outlets. They have to present their diplomas and certificates. Parties of 10 persons will get a free bottle of house wine. Call 9277424, 6875254, 8981815, 7264663 and 9136112.

CHINESE Monk gives graduates a 15-percent discount until April 15. A free bottle of house wine will be given to parties of 10. Bring your graduation diploma and certificate. Chinese Monk is at the G/L, Powerplant Mall, Rockwell Center, Makati. Call 8974129.

MARIO'S has prepared a Graduation Special Menu for only P525. It consists of Pan-seared Fillet of Beef with melted Black Pepper-Garlic Napa Cabbage and Broiled Miso-Citrus Salmon with Sushi Rice. The dishes come with the Hearty Soup of the Day and special dessert. A graduate who dines with three or more companions gets the special for free. Just present valid identification. The offer is good until April 30. Call 3720360.

PEKING Garden has a special graduation set menu for 12 persons at P4,600+ that includes cold-cut combination, fish lips with shredded chicken soup, deep-fried shredded beef with chili, crispy sesame puffs, deep-fried peppercorn prawns, scrambled egg white with minced fish and dried scallops, braised e-fu noodles with straw mushrooms, Peking Garden fried rice. Every reservation for three tables gets one free Peking Duck certificate that may be used on the next visit. An affiliate of Maxim's Group of Restaurants-Hong Kong, Peking Garden is located at Glorietta 2, Ayala Center, Makati City. Call 8179066/8179067.



LUK Yuen Noodle House offers Pihng Pihng Tien Tien (cold and sweet *halo-halo*) with eight freshly prepared ingredients—silver fungus jelly, red dates, Chinese black *gulaman*, white beans, *ube* cubes, diced green *nata de coco*, red *mongo* beans and red *gulaman*, plus ice cream topping from Big Scoop Ice Cream for P68. Pihng Pihng is available at Luk Yuen Glorietta 2, Ayala Center, Makati City; Cash & Carry, Filmore St., Makati; SM Megamall Bldg. B Basement; Greenhills Shopping Center; Paseo de Magallanes and Makati Supermarket, Alabang Town Center.

HYATT Regency Manila presents burger at its best this April with the Kobe Cheese Burger set menu at the Tempura Misono Japanese Restaurant. The burger uses real ground Kobe beef grilled to perfection. Diners in the teppanyaki section will have the burger grilled right at their table then served with a slathering of wasabi mayonnaise and tempura fries on the side. For P990+, the Kobe Beef Burger set menu also includes Japanese green salad, Miso soup and fresh fruits for dessert. Call 8331234 local 81423.

COFFEE Beanery offers two special cool blends this summer: Green Tea Milkshake and Strawberry Smoothie. The health-conscious can try Sugarfree Green Tea and Yogurt Shake with Sugarfree Chilled Cheesecake. Another special is the Nanaimo Bar, a chewy pecan and coconut crusted bar glazed with melted dark chocolate. Coffee Beanery outlets are in Quezon Avenue, Don Antonio Commonwealth, Robinsons Place Pioneer, E. Rodriguez, Metrowalk Ortigas, Mandaue City, Shangri-La Plaza Mall and all Cravings Restaurants. Call 4266681.

DIADORA

DIADORA

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6:00 PM
MARCH 31, 2005
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PHILIPPINE
FASHION WEEK

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LAKBAY

Attack of the (text) clones

THE CONSUMER

Marietta Velasco Giron

IF YOU think unsolicited promotional messages are a menace, wait until you get one of these self-repeating texts that resend themselves to you ad infinitum.

I just got this kind of text last week that kept coming one after the other. I lost count after 15 because I was deleting the messages as fast as they were coming, lest my Inbox got so overloaded that the texts I was saving would be erased.

The message was only "TNX" but imagine how much that cost the sender!

I found out later that the person who sent me the self-replicating text also had a message sent repeatedly to somebody who was out of the country at the time. That did not only inconvenience the recipient but it also meant additional charges for him. Messages and calls received while one is out of the country are charged by both local service provider and foreign host network.

Well, it turned out that, like me, some staff members of Inquirer's Lifestyle section had also received these self-cloning texts! One of them, for example, got the same love note five times. The sender sent the message only once.

What happened to a young staff member was worse. She sent a text message from Thailand and it was received 27 times by the recipient here. Using a prepaid phone, that one message appeared to have almost used up her P2,000 load, which she hoped would cover her very brief stay in Thailand.

Evidently, this problem has been around much longer as the following e-mail proves. I got this complaint from C. M. Reyes of Cesmar Pharmacy in Nasipit, Agusan del Norte a few weeks ago:

"...my wife received 15 duplicate messages from her friend. *Sabi naman ng* friend *nya* once *lang daw nya na* send *ang* message but she was deducted P15 (from her pre-paid load). Yesterday I received two messages (duplicate) from my daughter. *Palagay ko* this is not an isolated case."

Based on the number of complaints I have on my list, Globe and Smart cell phone users have their shares of these repetitive texts. However, there were more texts originating from Smart units.

Just asking. Could this be the cell phone virus we consumers have been warned about?

Whatever it is, this may yet be the scourge of the cell phone industry.

Prompt response

We thank Arlyn R. Samaniego from the public affairs office of Smart for the prompt explanation she sent by e-mail regarding these repetitive text messages. She assured text senders that they were charged only P1 for each message, regardless of how many times it was sent by the network to the recipient. She added that the recurrent transmission of identical texts was an "isolated occurrence."

She wrote:

"The sending of multiple messages has occurred, albeit in isolated instances. A check with our system has shown that when the message sender is in an area with a particularly marginal signal, the network will continually forward a message until it receives confirmation that it has been received by (the) recipient.

"The message sender is charged only P1 for every text message sent. The occurrence of multiple sending happens only within our network in an effort to make sure that all sent messages are received. Multiple charges in cost to the subscriber do not happen because of this.

"We apologize for any inconvenience this has caused. Please rest assured however that this is in line with our efforts to provide our consumers the best service. We have also gotten in touch with Mr. Cesar Reyes (see complaint above) to inquire about the subscriber details of the friend he had referred to in his e-mail. He has responded positively to us, and will (provide) us with the details very soon. We hope this has answered your inquiries."

Unsolicited promo

Speaking of unwanted messages, Senator Mar Roxas filed Senate Resolution 169 urging the Senate committee on public services to look into those unsolicited promotional text messages via cell phone, as well as through the Internet and e-mail. He is asking the committee to inquire about the practice of telecommunication companies and third-party content providers of sending these unsolicited promo texts.

He pointed out, "The mobile telephone is a personal communication device. We are duty-bound to safeguard the right of subscribers to privacy of communication. Apart from causing inconvenience, uninvited messages prejudice the rights of subscribers to prompt and efficient service, and to freedom from possible false representation. In the process, subscribers lose value for their money."

Several bills, according to Sen. Roxas, have already been filed, both in the Senate and the House of Representatives, seeking to prohibit mobile telephone operators from sending unsolicited materials to subscribers.

Send consumer complaints and comments to giron@mailstation.nettion.net

Learn to whip up Spanish cuisine

THE San Miguel Purefoods Culinary Center invites you to learn and have "A Taste of Spanish Cuisine", 1:30-4:30 p.m., April 8, at the San Miguel Purefoods Culinary Center, Legazpi corner Eagle Streets, Barrio Ugong, Pasig.

Juan Carlos de Terry, food connoisseur and owner of Terry Selection, will conduct the class. Fee is P700.

Call 6719876 local 402, 2771, 404 and 405. Early reservation and payment are required as available slots are limited.

Cooking classes for kids and teens

MAYA Kitchen Summer Culinary Workshop will conduct classes for kids and teens to enable them to prepare their own meals.

"Young People's Cook-In for 11 and up," 9 a.m. to 2 p.m., April 12-14, offers basic cooking and baking techniques including food presentation and styling. Students will learn, among others, Minestrone, Molded Tuna Chunks, Herbed Grilled Vegetables, Seafood Quiche, Honey Roasted Chicken Legs, Chocolate Chips Cookies, Black Forest Crepe, Caramel Bars and No-Bake Cheesecake.

Kids aged 6-10 can join the Junior Culinary Workshop 8:30 a.m. to 12 noon, April 13-15. The workshop will cover hygiene, sanitation and safety in the kitchen; Kitchen Math, table setting and napkin folding. Lessons will include Macaroni and Cheese with Crumb Toppings, Chuckling Chicken, Sweet Corn Chowder, Fruit Jello, Brownie Cup Cakes with Peanut Butter Frosting, Choco-dipped Macaroon and Cookie Tower.

Offered for adults is "Cooking I," 8:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m., April 5-8, that will cover proper hygiene, sanitation and safety; nutrition and nutritional cooking; stocks, soups and sauces, and their 1001 application to poultry, fish, shellfish, fruits and vegetables; common herbs and spices; purchasing; marketing and proper storage; menu planning; simple garnish and plate presentation.

An actual cooking workshop will show how to prepare everything from appetizer to dessert.

"Baking I" at 2 to 5:30 p.m. will cover the basics of baking including techniques in the preparation of pies, quick breads, cakes and others. Participants will get a free cookbook each.

The workshop, "Professional Japanese Cooking," will be conducted 2 to 6 p.m., April 12-14. Participants will learn how to prepare authentic Japanese food like rice dishes (Nishokudon Gomaku Zosui, Onigiri or Curry Rice), Salads (Stick Salad Shoyoyu Yakinasu, Horenso Goma-ae, Harusame), main dishes (Katsu Sand-Tonkatsu, Wafu Spaghetti, Tofu Gratin, Shioiyaki, Oden, Shishamo, Agedashi Dofu), and soups (Yasai, Wakame, Tofu Misoshiru).

The Maya Kitchen is at the 8/F, Liberty Building, A. Arnaiz Avenue (formerly Pasay Road), Makati City. Call 8921185 or 8925011 local 108. E-mail mkitchen@ultimate.info.com.ph.

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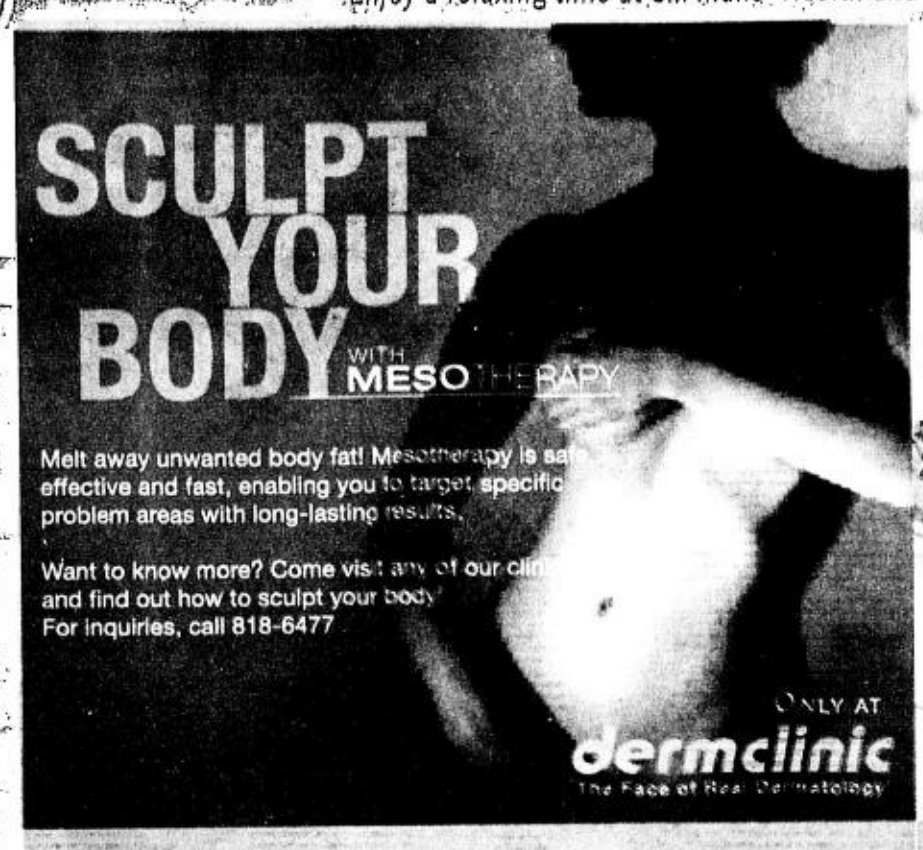

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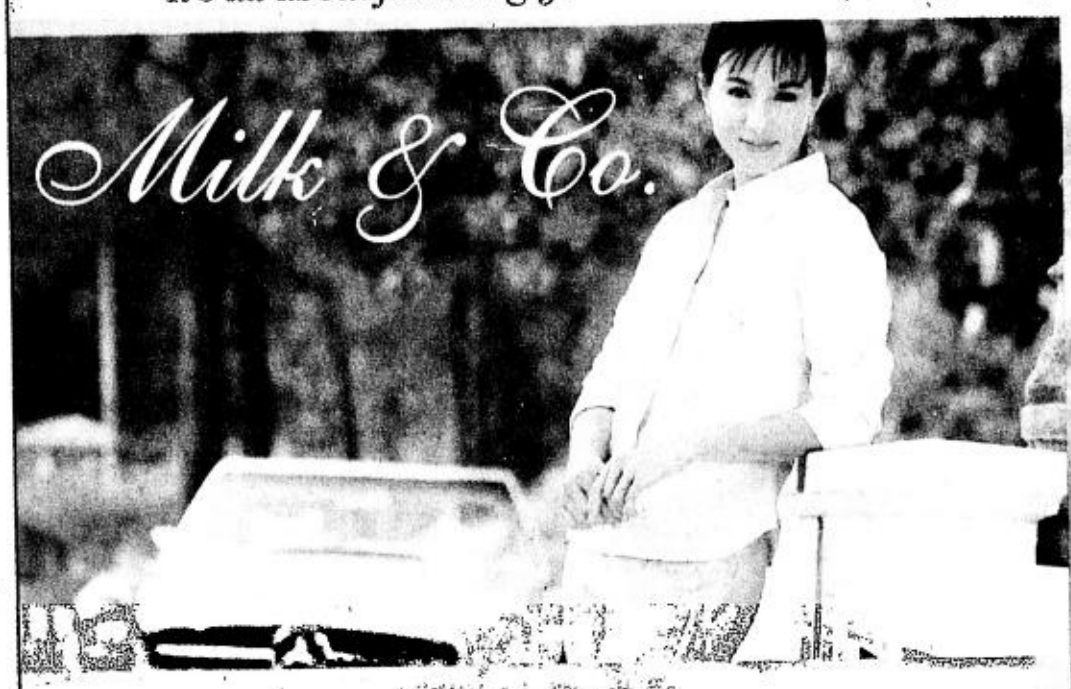
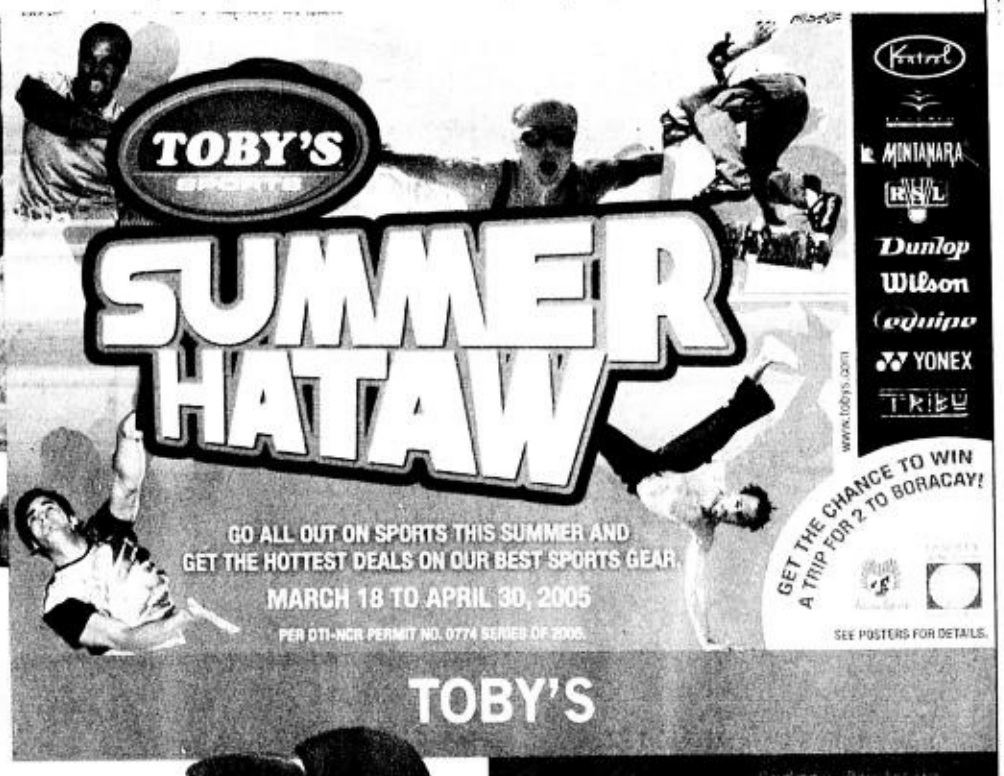
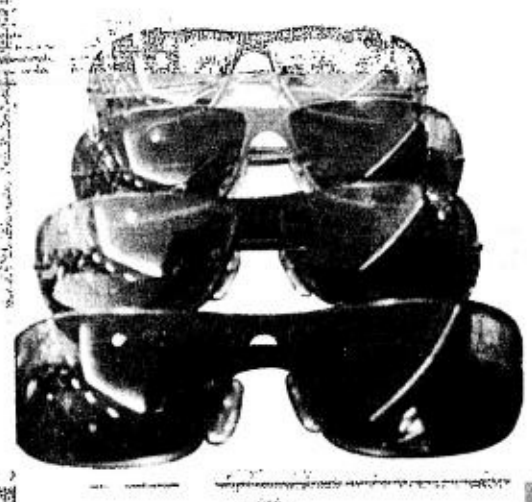
It's all about flaunting your assets and shaking your groove thing with these booty-licious summer wear!





Dress to impress and catch everyone's eye with fashion-savvy clothes from Maldita.

MALDITA

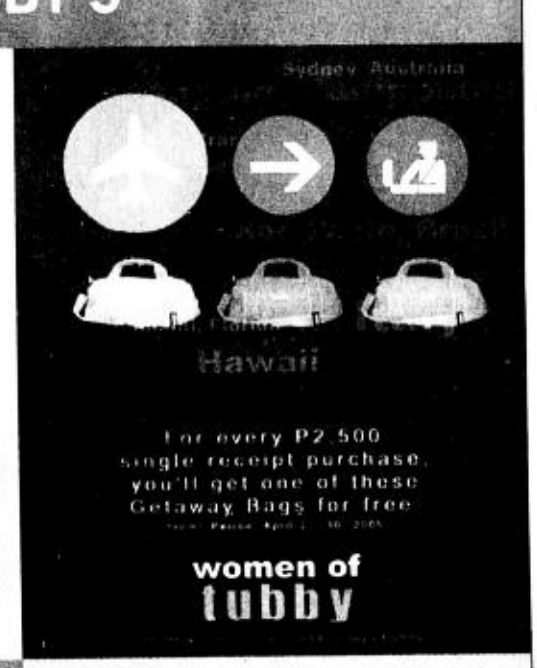


Protect your eyes from the summer sun's harsh UV rays and look good in i2i's eyewear collection.

i2i

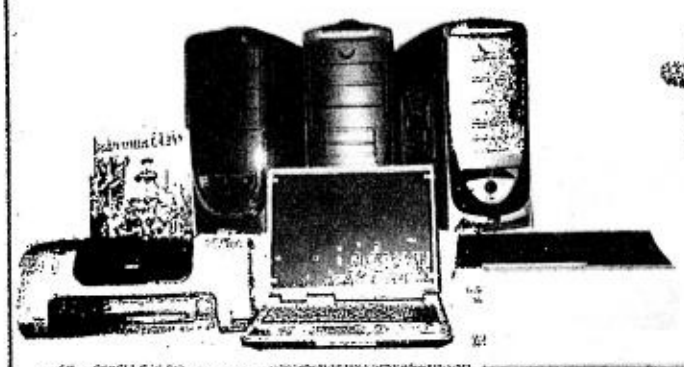
Personalize your summer gear at Made For U.

MADE FOR U



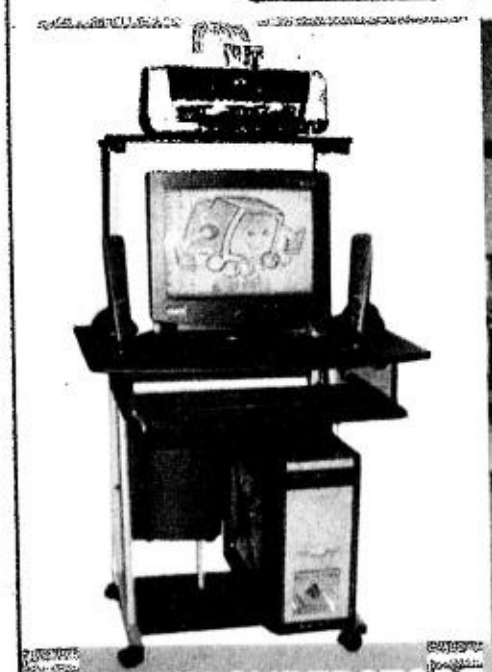
SUMMER Virtual Escape

STAR APPLE II

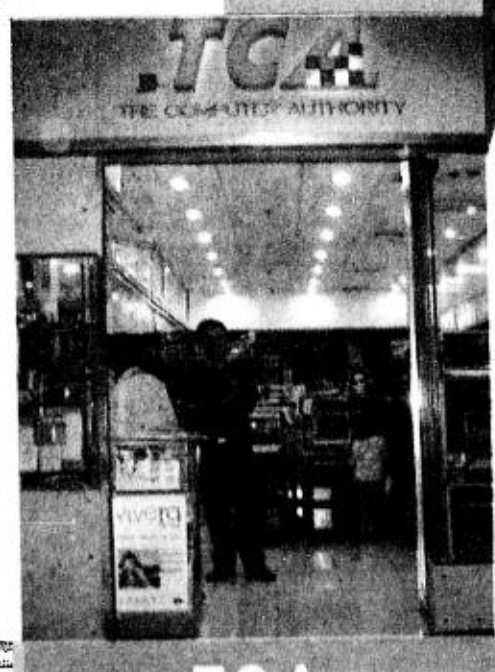


LA GEAR

SEGUE



PC CHAIN SUPERSTORE



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NETOPIA

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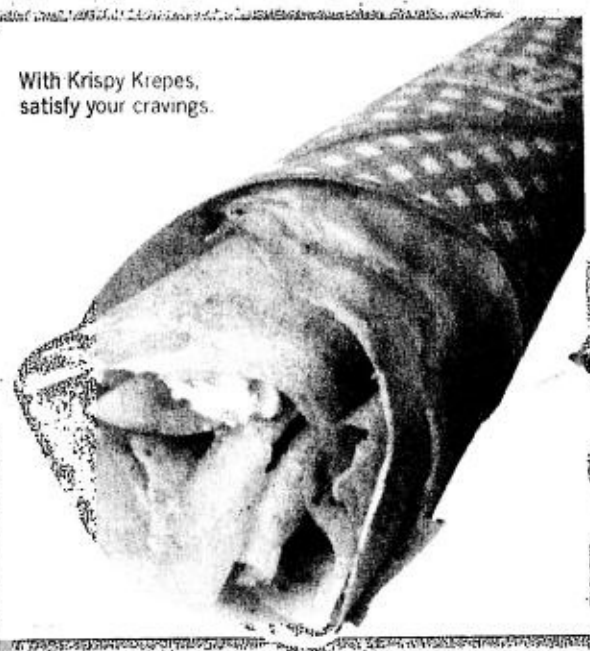
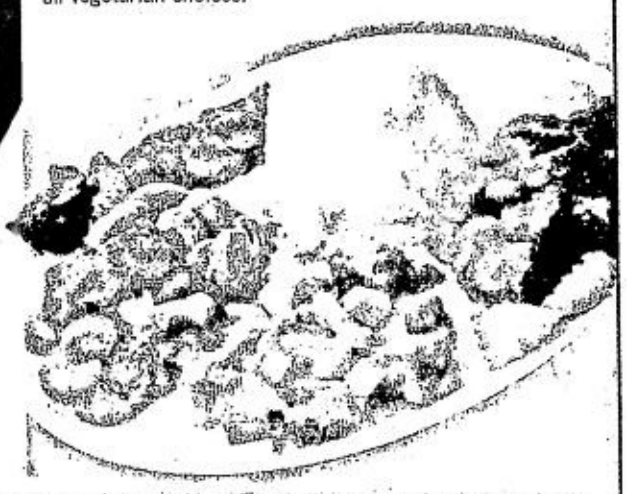


Eat healthy and look svelte in that swimsuit, with Bodhi's all-vegetarian choices.



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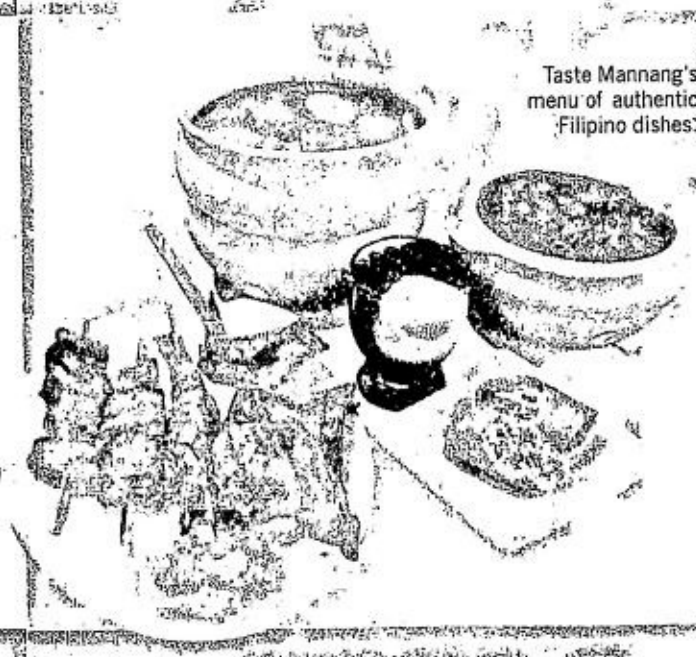
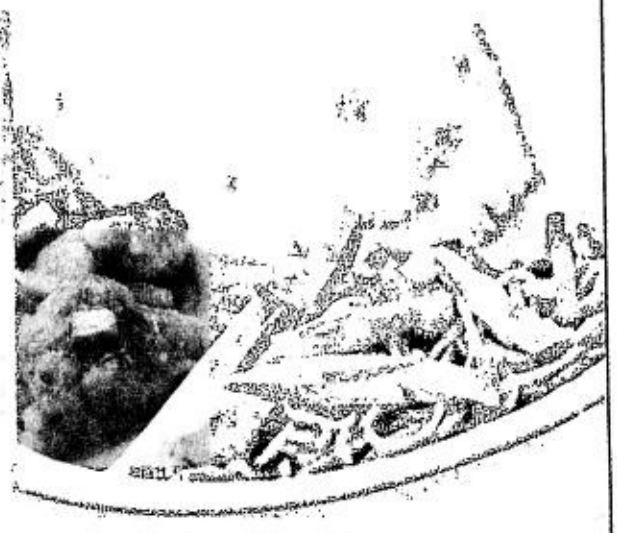


MANNANG



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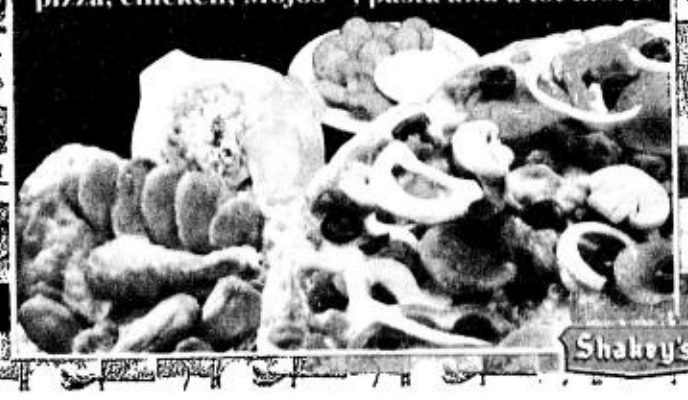

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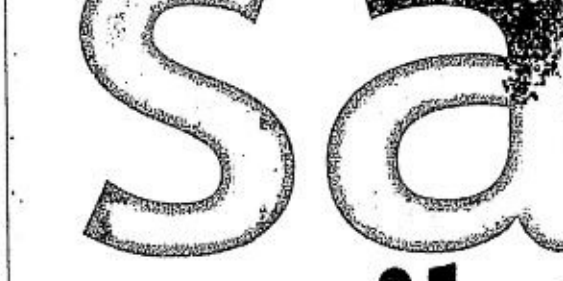

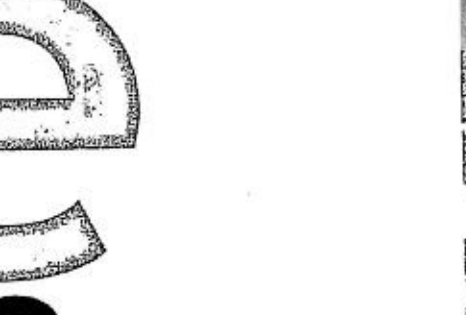

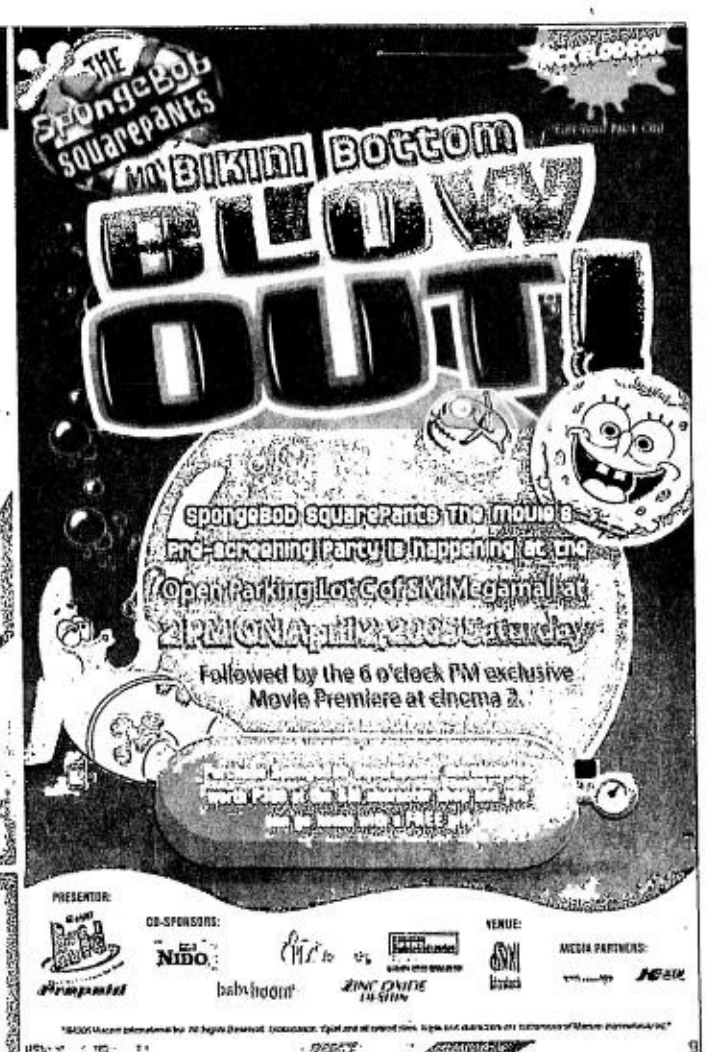

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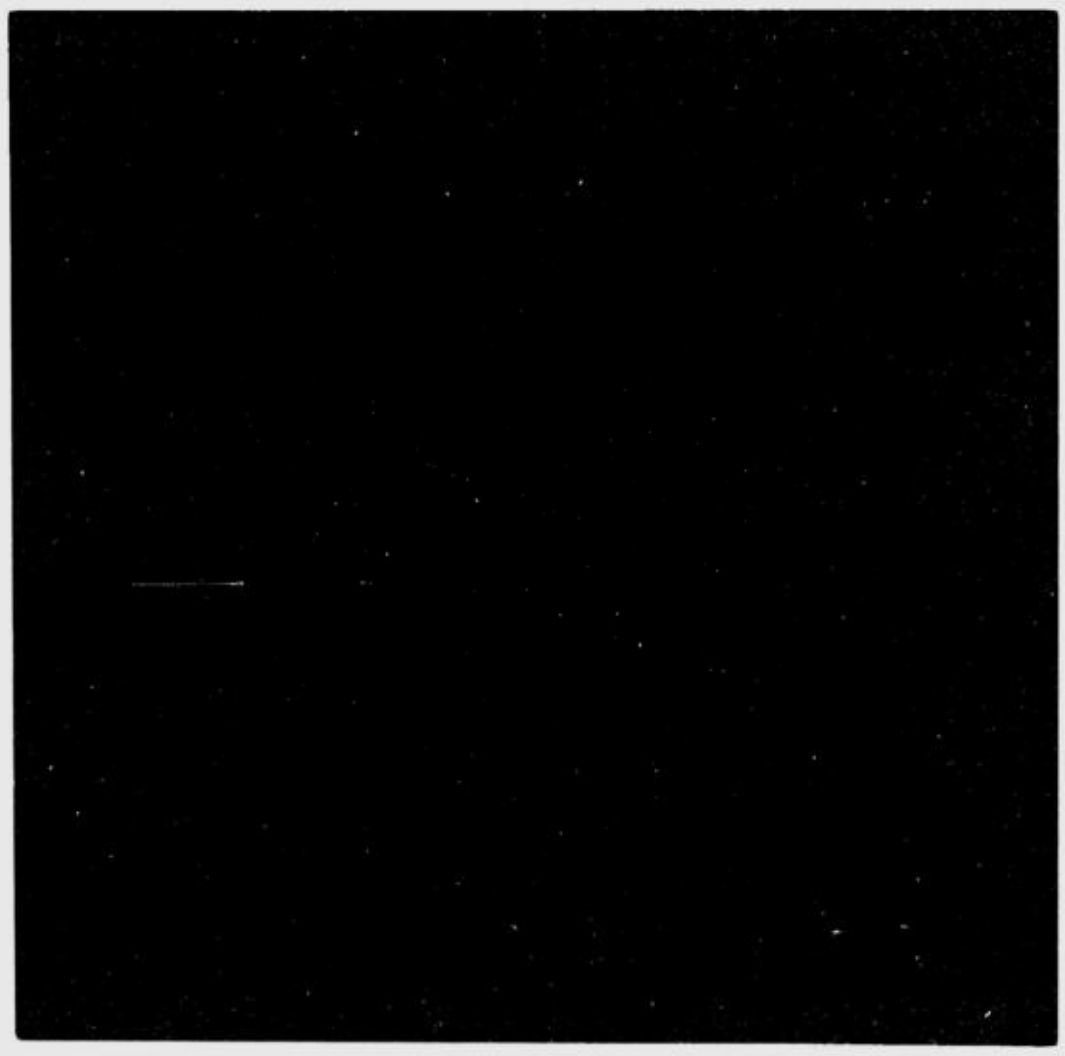

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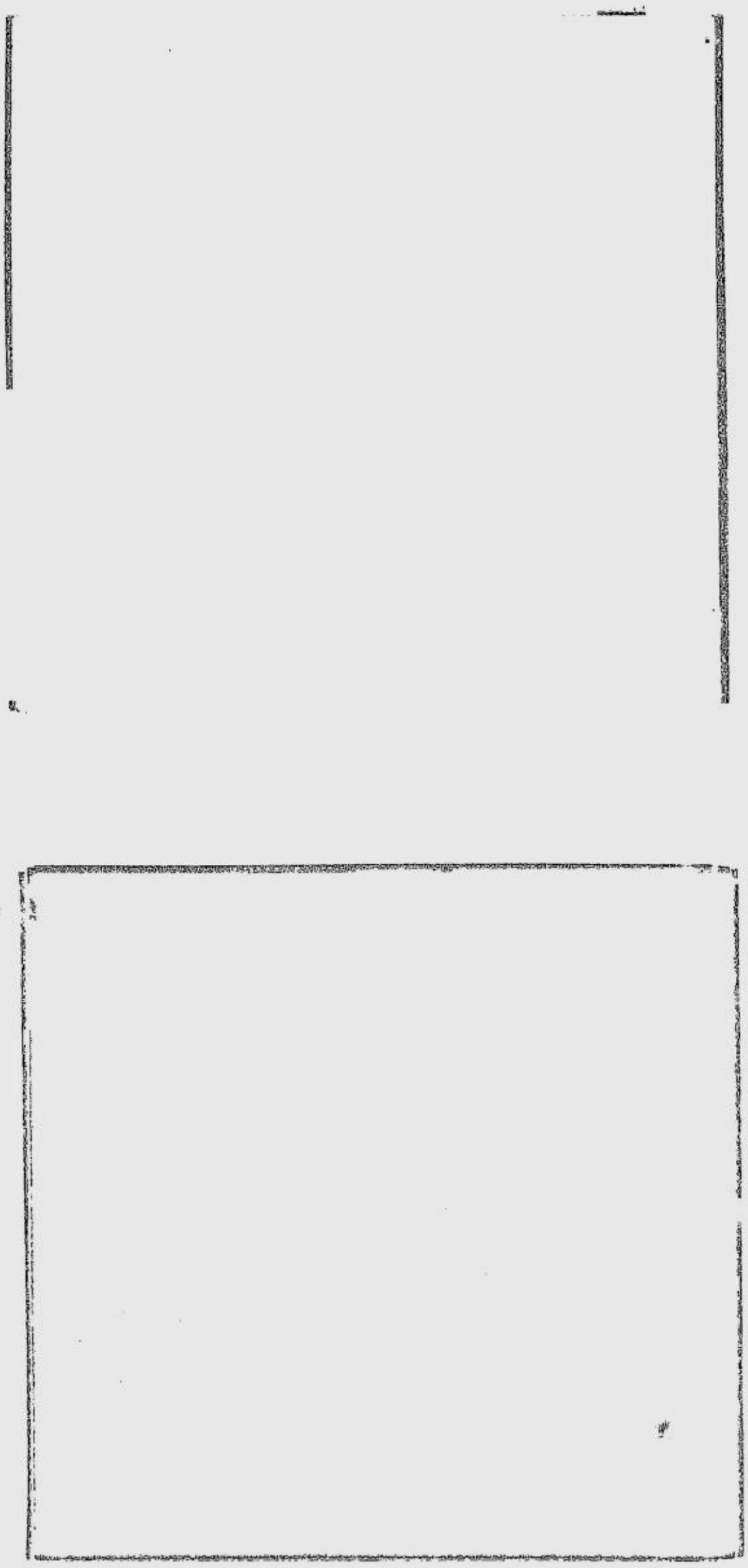

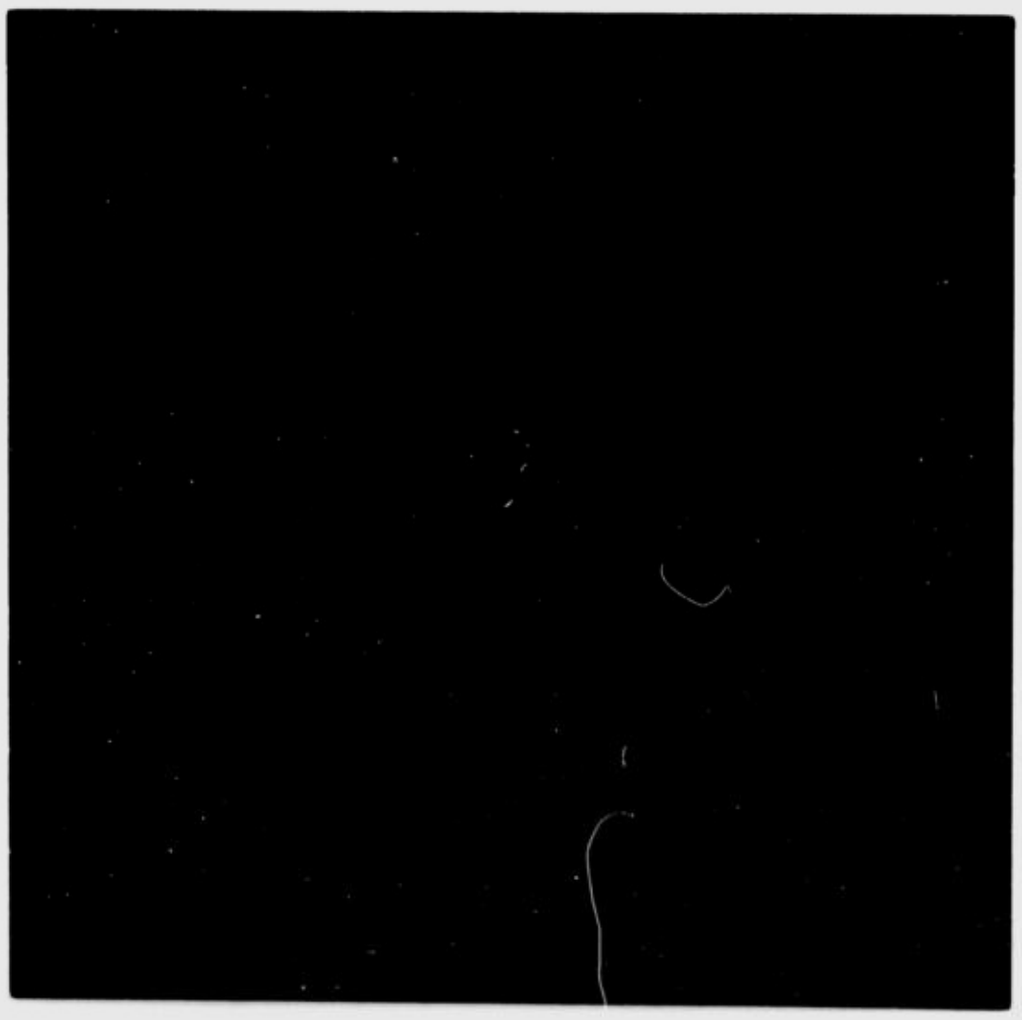

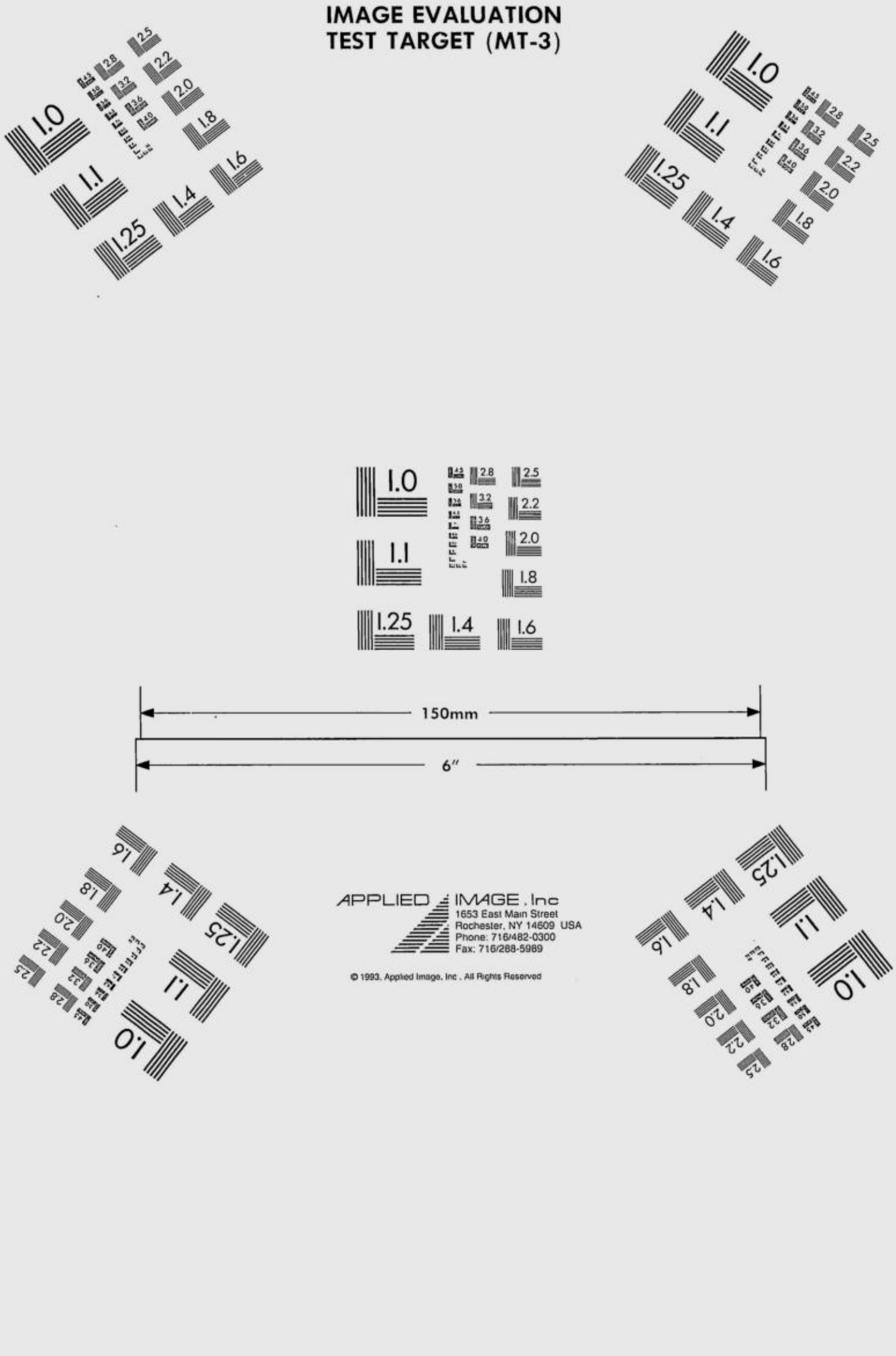

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